TEN YEARS IN ANGLICAN ORDERS

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WITH A PREFACE BY

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL VAUGHAN.

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The Cardinal's Introduction to the Third Edition.

This work, "Ten Years in Anglican Orders," has already made its mark. I recommend its perusal with great confidence. It is a genuine and a sincere portraiture of a state of things that deserves to be known and studied. The author has, for reasons that demand respect, remained anonymous. But personality has little or no place in a recitation of facts and circumstances; and it is by these that a religious system must be judged. Let them be examined and carefully compared with the experience of others before judgment is pronounced.

HERBERT CARDINAL VAUGHAN,
Archbishop of Westminster.

July 29th, 1901.

Father Rivington's Introduction to the First Edition.

The manuscript of this book having been placed in my hands for publication, I have had no hesitation in introducing it to the public, on two grounds: First, because it affords a glimpse into the working of the Anglican system, such as no other book, that I know, contains, coming, as it does, from a quarter from which we have not had so many conversions as from the High Church, or Ritualistic, section of the Church of England; and, secondly, because it contains the unveiling of a soul's struggle towards the truth, described with a pathos and power of analysis which are rarely combined. The author has not long been in the Church.

LUKE RIVINGTON.

March, 1897.

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I.

MY ORDINATION.

IT is not necessary for the main purpose of these records, that I should enter upon an explicit account of the circumstances connected with my life and education previous to my ordination. They are not of any specific interest, and cannot be said to have been of an exceptional character. Two points ought perhaps to be mentioned as standing in a certain relation to the later attitude of my mind, when face to face with the inconsistencies and anomalies of the Anglican system of religious thought. It was, in the first place, at a somewhat riper age than that at which the larger number of men enter the ministry, that I made up my mind to seek ordination. And it was from no mixed motive that I determined upon this serious step. I had taken much time and thought to consider it, and had a deep sense of the grave responsibility which it involved.

My character was not wholly unformed. I had both read and travelled a good deal, and had had exceptional opportunities of gaining some practical insight into human life. I had sufficient knowledge of the world and of the many-sidedness of human character to enable me to take what are called generous and liberal views of things. My mind was to a certain extent open and unprejudiced in the matter of doctrinal religion and the systematic definitions of Revealed Truth. I knew something of the different schools of modern religious thought and interpretation, and had, of course, my own personal leanings and preferences. But I was anxious to learn and to gain a really intelligent insight into the system and principles of the National Church, and I entered upon my preparatory work with zeal and real interest.

A second point which I ought perhaps to mention is the natural early tendency of my mind to think seriously on the great problems of life and death and of individual moral responsibility, and to go as far as I could to the root of any matter that presented any real interest to me. I had thus already, by a process of reflection, come to some certain well-defined conclusions which seemed to me essential to any intelligent apprehension of religious truth. I recognized very clearly, that there are fundamental facts of our moral consciousness, involving primary truths, of which the accepted rationalistic philo-

sophies of life take no proper and adequate cognizance, and that modern science had most certainly failed to satisfactorily answer the deeper questions which never cease to agitate the human soul. I felt that the measure of knowledge of divine things which the facts of our inner consciousness constantly bring to our mind, are but a partial and elementary knowledge which incessantly postulates a fuller and more complete disclosure from without, and that only this fuller knowledge was likely to satisfy the longings and yearnings of the awakened human spirit. My experience of human life, imperfect as it was, had nevertheless created the firm conviction in my mind that most thoughtful persons are fully conscious of a certain flaw in life, of a blank, a pain, an experience (*Weltschmerz*, as the Germans call it) which is perhaps better felt than described, but which undoubtedly lies at the root of all human misery and wretchedness.

I had, on the other hand, become morally and intellectually convinced that Christianity is the pearl of great price, the one power in human life calculated to fill this void and to answer the burning questions of the soul. I had seen something of its practical influence and operation, of its effects upon human character in its most divers manifestations. I had felt its influence upon my own soul, laid open as it had been by the experiences of life, to its constraining and enlightening

influences. And I was longing to apply the truths I had received directly and practically in some congenial sphere of life, thereby expanding and developing the powers and susceptibilities of my own spiritual nature. Friends and the associations of life pointed to the National Church as the best medium for carrying these earnest desires into effect, and were in a certain sense largely instrumental in determining my future course. I began to read theology under an experienced tutor, and offered myself for ordination in one of the larger and populous dioceses in England.

I must confess that in now recalling to my mind the experiences which I am about to relate, and which are, in a way, introductory to my clerical life, I am somewhat astonished that the intellectual difficulties which at this early period already made themselves felt, did not take a firmer hold upon me, and that I even temporarily succeeded in effacing them from my mind. Had it been otherwise, how much pain and anguish would have been spared me, how many hours of mental and moral torture should I have escaped! But who can penetrate the mystery which lies behind the forces of human thought and environment, or in any but the faintest measure understand the methods which God adopts in training and educating the human soul? It may be that it is only through the mazes and intricacies of human error and perversion that some souls are destined to find

their way to the light, and that the discipline, which such a search involves, is the most effective means of rousing the energies of the mind and of awakening its latent possibilities.

I certainly remember being at this period and before my ordination, on several occasions, seriously troubled by certain difficulties and inconsistencies in matters of doctrine and teaching to which my mind found no rational and satisfactory solution. My tutor, who directed my studies, was a man of Evangelical tendency of thought, but with considerable respect for the learning and scholarship of the leaders of the High Church Party. The books which I read under his direction were calculated to establish in my mind distinctly Evangelical principles. They were in the direction of a liberal but distinctly Protestant view of the Church and its formularies, and gave me a firm, clear grasp of the theology of the 39 Articles. I was led to see, that the very *raison d'être* of the Anglican Church and its teaching was the Reformation in its reasonable and liberal interpretation, and that the principles of the Sacramental or Catholic school of thought found no support from any portion of the Prayer Book and the Articles. My own rationalistic temper of mind responded readily to this form of teaching; and I became, in a certain sense, established in what are known as Evangelical Church principles. My tutor was a man

of amiable disposition and of considerable attainments. He had had much experience in the preparation of candidates for Holy Orders, and took much pains to show the tenableness, from the standpoint of fact and history, of his own religious position. He was never tired of demonstrating the unreasonableness of the Catholic system of doctrine and the manifest corruption of the Roman Church. He had apparently good and valid reasons for the opinions and beliefs he held.

Nevertheless, an irresistible suspicion sometimes crossed my mind that he was not quite so sure of his position as he was anxious to appear, and that vague misgivings occasionally troubled his mind. There was an eagerness and vehemence about his statements which I instinctively felt to be out of proportion to the importance of the subject matter under discussion. It seemed to me that a cultivated mind, deeply convinced of a certain truth, might well be content to dismiss it with the plain statement of fact and let that speak for itself, need not incessantly be seeking to assert it by fresh arguments and evidence.

I could, for instance, never understand why he constantly discredited the now universally admitted fact of S. Peter's early work and sojourn at Rome when, as he declared, the claim had long been dismissed by intelligent men, and no person of even moderate scholarship

believed it. Somehow he could never leave S. Peter alone. Precious half-hours, which I was anxious to devote to serious thought and preparation, he would spend in throwing the light of Protestant History upon the "Petrine claims," invariably leaving the impression upon my mind that the effort was wholly out of proportion to the urgency of the matter, and that he was trying to efface convictions which somehow had take possession of his mind. After all, intellectual belief and conviction cannot be created at will. They are the necessary result of certain processes of thought and of facts brought to our knowledge, and they take possession of our minds whether we like it or not. My tutor was a scholar as well as a Christian, and with the facts of history as they have since come to my knowledge before me, it is not difficult for me to understand this peculiar state of mind. The Protestant bias of the man was manifestly pulling one way; the indubitable historic knowledge of the scholar was pulling the other, and as a consequence the mind was ill at ease and unconsciously giving expression to its perplexity.

I have again and again, throughout my clerical career, observed this strange mental phenomenon, this picture of a divided mind torn by conflicting influences and feelings. It is most certainly no easy matter to run counter to long-established habits of thought, and, in the interests of Truth, to free the mind from every trace of

bias and prejudice. It is an almost impossible task with certain orders of mind. The best of men shrink from facing a truth which they instinctively feel to carry with it unwelcome and inconvenient consequences, and which will not infrequently involve the peace and security of their life. We prefer the ease of a false security to the thorny path which must be traversed in the search after Truth.

But my first great difficulty presented itself in the perplexing fact that, while the Bishop who had accepted me for ordination in his diocese was a man of liberal mind and of old-fashioned Evangelical principles, his Examining Chaplains were men of "advanced views." They were, in fact, High Churchmen of a pronounced type, and were in the habit of examining candidates on books written from the High Church point of view. A paper was sent to me containing a list of books recommended to candidates preparing for ordination, from which I found, to my dismay, that not one of the books on the more important subjects which I had been reading all this time under my tutor's direction was amongst the number, and that many of those named were works against which I had been repeatedly and earnestly warned by him. My position, therefore, was manifestly a most perplexing one. I was anxious to satisfy my Bishop, in whose diocese my future work would lie and who had expressed sincere sympathy with my views; but I also knew that my

more immediate and urgent duty would be to satisfy my examiners, who were High Churchmen, and who, by the books they recommended, repudiated my own views and those of the Bishop. I had my firm personal convictions based upon the instructions I had received at the hands of my tutor and I was determined, in so solemn a matter, to declare my belief without hesitation and compromise. But I was also anxious to pass my examination and, if possible, to pass it with credit, and I had heard of instances in which the examiners had rejected candidates holding views similar to my own. There was the highest probability that I should be rejected if I followed their example and made a point of honestly defending my views.

To this day I have a vivid recollection of the perplexity which this complicated question caused to my mind, and of the earnestness with which I prayed that light and guidance might be vouchsafed to me: that I might find it possible to solve the difficulty to the satisfaction of my Bishop, to that of his Examining Chaplains and of the claims of my own conscience. I consulted several of my friends. Some of them advised me to express my convictions unreservedly, and irrespective of the views of the examiners and of the ultimate consequences. They thought it not impossible that even an Examining Chaplain might be converted by a faithful witness for Evangelical truth. Some

thought that the difficulty would probably be limited to one or two papers—on Doctrine, perhaps, and the Prayer Book—and that it ought to be no difficult matter to "dodge" the examiners. One clerical friend pointed out to me that there was a way of satisfying the examiners without compromising my principles. It was possible for me to show my knowledge of theology, of the facts of history and the doctrinal differences of Anglican schools of thought, without personally identifying myself with either school; in fact to look upon the examination from a purely literary standpoint. After all, the examination did not propose to test the character and purity of my belief, but the extent of my knowledge. It had nothing to do with my personal creed and conviction. I had but to satisfy the examiners by showing that I had an intelligent knowledge of the respective subjects under consideration, and that I had really given time and thought to the matter.

It was on this principle that I succeeded in satisfying the Chaplains and in passing my examination. Some of the papers set me made the task comparatively easy; others contained various direct and searching questions; but I adopted my friend's principle, gave proof of my knowledge to the very best of my ability, taking pains not to commit myself by disclosing my own personal views and convictions. By what has since appeared to

me to be nothing less than a feat of mental gymnastics, I managed to solve the difficulty without the sacrifice of principles.

But a far deeper and more solemn question was constantly present to my mind. What was really the doctrine of the Church of England? What was I to teach in my future sphere of work? I knew that I could not hope to permanently satisfy my mind with some phrase or platitude. I saw very clearly that the views of the two great schools of thought in the Church which I proposed to enter were wholly dissimilar and mutually destructive, and that if one was true then the other must be false. Which was false and which was true? Are the souls of men regenerated by the Sacramental gifts and grace of God, or by a subjective act of faith? Do we, in the Eucharistic Feast, receive verily and indeed the Body and Blood of Christ, or do we not? One conclusion manifestly excludes and contradicts the other, and I felt that it would be impossible for me to escape this question finally.

Solemn considerations of this character were constantly foremost in my thoughts, and I made very earnest efforts, by a more diligent application to my books and by the most earnest prayer, to clear my mind and to reach some solid and intellectually tenable position. It was the natural habit of my mind to endeavour to go to the root of matters; but how

urgently was this called for in a matter of such serious importance and involving such very solemn issues. I felt that it might be difficult for me to agree with doctrines clearly taught by the Church whose ministry I prepared to enter. But my reason and common sense demanded that it should be possible for me to ascertain what that doctrine was, and what the Church really required me to teach respecting the great truths of Salvation and Redemption. And with these thoughts a vague feeling of distrust grew up in my mind. What view was I to take of a Church which commissioned its ministers to deliver an important message, but hesitated clearly to define what that message really was, and took no pains to ascertain how far the men it proposed to consecrate had themselves received and understood it?

It seemed to me that my entire examination was of a purely literary character, and constituted no test whatever as to my personal belief and fitness for the work upon which I was declared to be qualified to enter. I was anxious to be loyal to the Church of which I was to be a consecrated minister; I was filled with a deep sense of the sacredness of my holy calling; I was quite prepared to put away from me any preconceived idea, based upon personal bias and tendency, and to proclaim the truths of Divine Revelation in the Church's form and in the Church's spirit. But how was I to ascertain the Church's mind; who could direct me and help me

to satisfy the reasonable claims of my heart and my conscience?

In now looking back, after the lapse of years, upon these early and spasmodic struggles of my mind, I recognize the fatal dangers which so frequently environ the searching soul, and which are so apt to hinder it in its progress towards Truth. Clerical friends told me that my reflections were morbid and one-sided, and that all my difficulties would vanish under the bracing influences of active work. They pointed out to me, that it was the glory of the National Church to insist upon a minimum of doctrine and to give ample scope for the exercise of the individual judgment. They assured me, that the influences consequent upon great reactions of religious thought were wholesome and, on the whole, beneficial to the Church's life, illustrating as they do the many-sidedness of Christian Truth and its adaptability to the changing needs and circumstances of human life. All forms of thought and doctrine had, in their opinion, up to a certain limit, their rightful place and use within the pale of a National Church, and were instrumental in widening its influence and in establishing its claim upon the enlightened intellect of this present age.

And thus my difficulties melted away. I exercised my private judgment, and in due time received Deacon's Orders in the Church of England.

II.

MY FIRST CURACY.

BEFORE recording the experiences incidental to my first sphere of work in the ministry of the Anglican Church, and the influences which these subsequently exercised upon my religious ideas, I will first of all describe very briefly what befell me in my search after a curacy. The events connected with this search, occurring as they did before my ordination, ought perhaps to have been mentioned in the course of the preceding narrative; but they seemed to me to fit in better with what I have to tell in my second chapter.

I had heard of a vacancy in a not unimportant seaside parish and had sent in my application. A note from the incumbent invited me to a personal interview in order to afford facilities for a full and fair discussion of the matter. The vicar met me at the station, and on the way to his house, explained to me the special needs and circumstances of his parish and what kind of man

he was anxious to secure for the post. I gathered, in the course of our conversation, that he was a pronounced High Churchman, and that some of the greater difficulties of his parish were due to the circumstance that he had succeeded a clergyman who had been distinguished for his strong Evangelical and Protestant sympathies. His people had not taken kindly to the new doctrine and ritual, and had gradually left the Church for the more congenial atmosphere and teaching of the local Dissenting Chapels. Dissent had, in consequence, become rampant in the town and was waging a bitter and incessant warfare against the vicar. He, in return, had come to hate it with a bitter hatred, and he found intense gratification, as he told me repeatedly and with much warmth and satisfaction, in seriously thwarting and annoying his Nonconformist brethren—an achievement certainly not difficult to accomplish considering his greater local influence and prestige. His difficulties had become still further accentuated by the scandalous behaviour of the last curate of the parish, who had been addicted to drink, and who had seldom if ever been in a fit state to conduct public worship or to preach a sermon in the church. The vicar was therefore anxious to meet with a man who was sober and steady and hard-working, and who "hated Dissenters." Other qualifications were, in his opinion, of secondary consideration. Slight divergences of view were bound

to adjust themselves. So far as he was concerned there need be no real difficulty to a man who was sincere and earnest and, in the matter of Dissenters, determined to be loyal to his vicar. Would I accept the post and its responsibilities?

There was nothing very exceptional in the circumstances which were thus being fully and fairly explained to me. I had heard of similar difficulties and perplexities in other parishes, and I paid every attention to the vicar's statement. But somehow I had, in the course of our conversation, become conscious of an inner warfare of conflicting feelings, the source of which I was vainly striving to fathom and to analyze. Almost instinctively I shrunk from the entire personality of the man. I felt intuitively that he was devoid of all finer feelings and sensibilities, and that he had an extremely low conception of the true aim and character of his mission and work. He seemed to me to lack all genuine spiritual perception, and to look upon his work and office from a purely material and business standpoint. On the other hand I could not help recognizing, that the parish was in a lamentable state, and that it might offer to a man like myself a useful as well as a promising sphere of work. It might be mere cowardice on my part to shrink from a plain duty on account of certain and perhaps surmountable difficulties. But I did not "hate Dissenters," and how could I hope to

work amicably with a man with whose entire policy and method of work I was already in the strongest possible disagreement?

I pondered these matters in my mind and then laid my difficulty before the vicar, pointing out to him the character of my earlier training, my own firm beliefs and convictions, and the doubts which I not unnaturally entertained under these circumstances as to my moral fitness for the post. The vicar listened respectfully to my statements, and after a moment's consideration replied curtly, that he did not care twopence about views. He was a High Churchman himself certainly, but he was tolerant of other people's beliefs and opinions; it mattered little what I taught so long as I managed to draw the people to the Church and undertook to make no kind of compromise with Dissenters. Did I believe in the Catholicity of the Anglican Church, in Baptismal Regeneration, and in the general worthlessness of the Reformation and its doctrines? These points were, to his mind, the essentials of Anglican Theology and, within these limits, any teaching would be acceptable to him.

I ventured to point out that I held distinctly Evangelical principles, that I could not honestly say that I believed in Baptismal Regeneration, and that I was strongly in sympathy with the Reformation and its doctrines, believing these to be the very life and *raison*

d'être of the Anglican Church. And I somewhat emphasized these points, because I was hoping that they would bring our difference of view in more striking contrast and release me from what was becoming to me a most uncomfortable position and dilemma. To my intense amazement, however, the vicar saw no good ground for rejecting me as a candidate for the vacant curacy. He explained that I should not find him over-anxious to press his views, and that he would give me exceptional liberty if I could make up my mind to accept his offer and help him in his work.

It was, of course, extremely difficult for me, under these circumstances, to give a decided and negative answer, and I therefore begged for time and quietness to ponder the matter and to discover, if possible, what was really my duty respecting it. Later in the day I attended weekly Evening Prayer and read the lessons in the church. There were three persons present at this service besides the vicar and myself, and the entire function was dreary and depressing in the extreme. I returned to the vicarage with a deeply distressed mind, and with a sense of oppression over which I sought in vain to gain the mastery. Upon my return to town, and after consultation with my friends, I wrote declining the curacy on the grounds of a too pronounced divergence of views.

A week later I heard of a vacancy in an important parish not far from London, and went to call upon the incumbent. He was an Irishman, of the more pronounced type, and received me with genuine warmth and kindliness. He proceeded at once to explain to me the character of his parish, its peculiar difficulties and possibilities and his own personal views and position in the Church. He was first and above all other things an ardent Protestant, and he could not conceive how any honest man, who had studied the Bible and the Articles, could be anything else. He looked upon the ritualistic movement as a huge conspiracy against the liberties of the National Church, and regarded it as the first duty of every honest Englishman to oppose its progress and encroachments. His own parish, he explained, lay in the very centre of ritualistic districts, and he deemed it his duty naturally to bear constant and active witness for the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. No man, therefore, could be of any use to him who did not share these views, and who could not make the principles of the Protestant Reformation the beginning and end of his teaching. And he must have no half-hearted man, no faint soul likely to make compromises with the enemy, but a bold, manly Christian, who would be loyal in season and out of season, and who could not only defend his own position but aggressively approach that of the hostile camp.

In the course of the delivery of these sentiments the vicar became intensely excited and dramatic, and I verily believe began to look upon me as one of the hostile camp. He certainly directed all the fervour of his oratory at me personally, and gave me no opportunity of expressing either assent to or dissent from his views. What could I do under the circumstances, but sit with folded arms and humble mien watching the excited cleric's perambulations, and wait patiently until the fervour of his emotion should spend itself and rational conversation become possible? But, to my amazement, he suddenly dropped on his knees by the side of a large armchair and invited me to join with him in earnest prayer that God would raise up earnest and loyal men, and that the enemies of Protestant Truth —the snakes in the grass—might be utterly confused and annihilated. I knelt with him that memorable morning in his cold and cheerless room, and my heart was cold and cheerless within me. I scarcely heard the violent tirade which came pouring from his lips, and no words of prayer came over my own lips when the wretched performance had come to a close. I felt depressed and ill at ease, a prey to a thousand conflicting feelings and emotions. I could not but institute a mental comparison between this clergyman and the one I had interviewed but a week before. What point of union was there between these two men on any single

doctrine or principle of the Church? In what possible sense could it be maintained that there was oneness of thought underlying the manifest differences of expression? These two men differed absolutely and hopelessly in their entire conception of Christianity and of the Church and the Sacraments, and they not only held no single truth in common, but one stood to the other in the relation of a bitter and uncompromising foe.

And what about the people to whom these men had been "sent," whom they were charged to admonish and instruct in the way of life and salvation? What were they to believe and to think? What effect was this divergence of belief likely to have upon their minds and consciences? There passed over my mind the vision of a scene I had once witnessed at the corner of Hyde Park on a Sunday afternoon: a very Babel of shrill voices sounding in the summer air, each clamouring violently to be heard, and offering some patent remedy, some panacea for the world's temporal and spiritual ills. I saw the eager, anxious faces of the speakers, their dramatic gestures and attitude, the puzzled looks of the passers by, the scoffs and jeers of the multitude. Was there any connection between this picture and that I had so lately witnessed, between Hyde Park on Sunday afternoon and the pulpits of the Anglican Church?

I felt that there was most certainly a serious flaw

somewhere in the teaching or constitution of the Church, could I but lay my hands upon it and call it by its proper name. I, too, believed in Protestantism and the Reformation. I believed that the ritualistic doctrine was contrary to the teaching of the New Testament and the Prayer Book. How was it then that my heart and nature shrank with loathing from this ardent Protestant, and that my whole soul rebelled against the sentiments to which he had given expression? Had God already laid His guiding hand upon me? Was He sowing the seeds of the higher truth in my heart, or perhaps preparing the soil by digging and weeding it? Was the "kindly Light" already shining on my path? How unsearchable are His judgments, His ways past finding out! My Irish friend offered me his curacy but I declined it, explaining that I believed myself wholly unfitted for the post.

After one or two subsequent inquiries I had the satisfaction of meeting with a clergyman who professed to be no very pronounced party man, and who warmly sympathized with me in the difficulties I had experienced in my search after a curacy. He was the vicar of a large suburban parish and was named with respect in Evangelical circles. We had but little conversation as to specific "views" and doctrines. We both felt intuitively, I think, that we were of one mind respecting the most essential points, and this feeling neutralized

most probably any marked differences which we might, under other circumstances, have found to exist. His attitude towards me was that of a friend rather than of a religious superior, who seemed really anxious to be helpful to me and to smooth away the difficulties that might be found to lie in my path. He was a man of considerable individuality of character: earnest, incisive, and energetic in his work, intensely practical in the organization and management of his difficult parish, spiritual certainly in his feelings and perceptions. He was a man of pronounced business instincts who thoroughly believed in making the very best of both worlds. He had a certain renown as a preacher, was respected by most of his people, and enjoyed the esteem of the neighbouring clergy. He had, however, little or no knowledge of Theology proper, and had certainly never in his life had the faintest shadow of a misgiving respecting his own doctrinal position. His teaching was simple, almost entirely based upon a textual use of the New Testament, and only very occasionally controversial. Belief in Christ as a Saviour, in its personal and subjective aspect, was to him the Alpha and Omega of all sound Church teaching, and round this central doctrine all other things fell into their proper and, of necessity, secondary place. Our working staff consisted of the vicar, three curates and a Scripture reader, and a miscellaneous number of district visitors.

The vicar was the life and centre of the parochial work, and had a marvellous gift of inspiring his staff with enthusiasm and interest. The parish was, on the whole, in good order. Many agencies were at work for instructing and interesting the people, and the feeling of the local Nonconformist bodies was friendly both towards the clergy and the Church.

It is with a sense of gratitude and tenderness that I now recall to my mind those first few months of my clerical career. They were sweet and unclouded, and altogether free from anything approaching disappointment and pain. No shadow of the coming struggles passed over my soul. Our people were kind and responsive, my fellow-curates genial and sympathetic, and our united efforts bore visible traces of blessing and success. Doctrinally we were practically masters of the situation. Ritualistic churches abounded in the district, but they were some distance from our parish and never penetrated our sphere. Only occasionally faint whispers of controversial warfare reached our ears. But neither of us clergy evinced any particular interest in the greater questions agitating the Church. We were happy and secure in our doctrine and our position, and were certainly fully occupied with our parish and its work.

My own teaching at this time was wholly based upon my personal convictions, confirmed as these had

become by the immediate influences which environed my life. Like my colleagues, I looked upon the New Testament as the great source of doctrine, and I had not a shadow of doubt respecting the reasonableness and tenableness of our place in the system of the National Church. The ritualistic position, so far as I understood it, appeared to me irrational and illogical, wholly untenable from the standpoint of historical fact. My earlier intellectual difficulties, however, had almost entirely disappeared under the bracing influences of active and constant work.

At this time a vacancy was to be filled on our clerical staff. Our vicar had fixed upon a gentleman who seemed in every way suitable for the post. He had taken honours at his University, and had subsequently passed through a prolonged course of careful theological training. He was well-grounded in Evangelical and Protestant principles, and was a man of sincere faith and unaffected piety. We were not a little startled when he came to tell us of his experiences with the Examining Chaplains. Searching questions had been put to him respecting the doctrine and principles of the Church of England, as expressed in the Book of Common Prayer and the Articles. It had never occurred to his mind that the instruction he had received at an important centre of theological education, and under the direction of an able and

learned dignitary of the Church, could be called in question by other able and learned men of the same Church. He had, therefore, innocently and unguardedly answered the questions put to him from the standpoint of his own religious position and the doctrinal teaching he had received. He had expounded his belief in the invisibility of the true Church, the unsatisfactory and equivocal character of the Prayer Book, and the general untenableness of the modern Catholic system of thought; had expressed it as his conviction that the Sacraments, so far from being immediate channels and vehicles of grace, were merely outward signs of certain inward spiritual transactions, and therefore of secondary importance in the doctrinal system of a manifestly Evangelical and Protestant Church. He had, as he considered, amply supported these views from the explicit statements of the Prayer Book and the Articles, and the history of the Anglican Church throughout the three hundred years of its existence.

These deliberate and, on modern Anglican principles, unguarded statements on the part of my colleague had caused a very storm of clerical indignation to break over his unoffending head. The Bishop's Chaplains had subjected him to a further and more searching *vivâ voce* cross-examination, and had pointed out to him that his views were diametrically opposed to the real teaching of the Prayer Book and the Articles in their true Anglican

interpretation, and contrary to the constant tradition of the Catholic and undivided Church. He was told that the Black Rubric was obsolete, that the Articles on the Sacraments were unsatisfactory, and he was referred to the Catechism for wholesome instruction on sound Anglican doctrine.

My friend's indignant reply that he was a member of a Church whose very existence was based upon the protest against Catholic doctrine and against the idolatrous teaching and practice of Rome and that he was seeking ordination in order to have better opportunities of repudiating these dangerous and soul-destroying errors, was met by the indignant reply that his ideas were false and un-Anglican and based upon un-Scriptural and wholly exploded theories of the Church. The Examiners further told my colleague that they had serious doubts as to his fitness for the Anglican ministry, and that they were sorely tempted to put him back for further study, and so afford him opportunities of unlearning his very un-Anglican notions respecting the position and doctrinal teaching of the Church of which he proposed to become a minister.

The effect of this startling experience can easily be conceived. My colleague entered upon his work with a rooted distrust of the constituted ecclesiastical authorities, and with an intense antagonism towards the Romanizing party in the Church. He moreover enter-

tained a not unnatural contempt for a Formulary from which such miscellaneous and mutually destructive doctrines could be extracted, and became strongly confirmed in his determination to base his teaching chiefly upon the New Testament and the 39 Articles of Religion, in their natural and simple and Protestant interpretation.

Upon my own mind these incidents exercised a similar but more permanent effect. They awakened all my previous scruples and difficulties, and caused a feeling of intense restlessness and dissatisfaction to take possession of my mind. What was really the teaching of the Church of England? Both my colleague's tutor and the Bishop's Chaplains were men of education and scholarship. Both had had the best possible opportunities of studying the history and doctrine of their Church. Both had access to the same materials for determining difficult and disputed points. Both were intensely convinced of the truth of their respective doctrine and its legitimate place in the Anglican Church. But the respective opinions at which these men had arrived were mutually destructive. Both could not possibly be true. Which, then, was true and which was false? Who could help me in solving this difficult problem, and thus relieve the distress and anxiety of my mind?

I saw very clearly that the dogmatic system of the two leading schools of thought in the Anglican Church

involved two entirely different principles, and consequently wholly dissimilar conceptions of the origin and maintenance of the divine life in the human soul. They therefore touched the most important and fundamental questions of the Faith. It was certain that if the strictly Evangelical doctrine and principle were true, then the High Anglican with his belief in Sacramental grace was labouring under a fatal delusion and trusting for the maintenance of his spiritual life in purely figurative and symbolic acts which conveyed nothing definite and specific to his soul. If, on the other hand, the High Church teaching were true, if the supernatural life in men was chiefly maintained by Sacramental acts validly performed by a valid priesthood, then the Evangelical teaching most unquestionably tended to deprive men of the gifts and graces necessary and essential to salvation, and was consequently a fatal and dangerous perversion of Truth. I have never been able to understand how it is possible for any logical mind to allow itself to confuse these plain issues and to escape the final and inevitable recognition of the difficulty. It seemed to me then as it seems to me now, that the popular notion of a certain unity of doctrine underlying the outward differences and expressions is wholly and absolutely untrue, and is continually being disproved by actual practice and experience. It is to my mind a miserable attempt to pervert the judg-

ment of the partially instructed and to beg the whole question. The very attitude in which these great schools of thought stood towards each other showed conclusively that there was no sort of union underlying their differences of doctrine, and that therefore the conception of the one or the other must be false.

The question seemed to me to resolve itself finally into these very simple points. Does our Lord act upon human souls to-day in the form and manner in which He did in the days of His flesh, and as we have it recorded in the books of the Gospels? Can the soul establish full and perfect union with Him by direct and personal means, by subjective acts of faith and trust in Him and in His power and love? Or has the form of His action upon men undergone some change? Have His Resurrection and Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Ghost altered the course of the Divine procedure and introduced some different or additional element? Is the true and full communion of the soul with the Saviour to-day Sacramental in character? I became convinced, after due reflection, that the difficulty practically turned upon these points, and I determined, God helping me, to solve it one way or the other. I made up my mind to enter upon a course of careful and serious reading and I prayed daily and earnestly, that God would help me to clear my mind, and would guide me aright in my search after Truth.

So far no serious misgiving as to my own spiritual state and position had taken root in my mind. I was morally and intellectually in full sympathy with the general aims and methods of the Church of England, and it did not occur to me for a moment, that any conclusions I might ultimately arrive at could in any way affect my position as an ordained minister of that Church. I never faintly suspected that the result of my fuller reading and research could be anything but a somewhat modified attitude towards the High Church Party, and the character of my teaching therefore underwent no appreciable change. Like my colleagues, I based my sermons upon the elementary truth running through the whole of the Sacred Scriptures, that living faith in Christ is the starting-point of the soul's renewed life, and that without a changed attitude of the heart towards the Saviour no Sacraments or ordinances could be of any conceivable profit or help. It seemed to me that I was perfectly safe on these lines. My views corresponded with those of my colleagues, and could be amply supported from the New Testament and the Articles of the Church.

But the germ of doubt and distrust had unquestionably been implanted in my mind, and it was causing me no end of discomfort and distress. I scrutinized every statement made by my colleagues inside and outside the Church. I allowed no doctrinal pronounce-

ment to pass muster without careful mental analysis, and I gave myself no end of trouble to ascertain the views of really eminent Anglican clergymen on disputed points of doctrine and of faith. For a time this kind of controversial strife remained, of course, confined to the world of my inner life, and its existence was scarcely suspected by my vicar and my colleagues.

But somehow, after a while, differences of view amongst the members of our staff began to make themselves felt. The examinational experiences of two of his curates had, after all, left their mark upon the vicar's mind, and his sermons assumed a more distinctly controversial tone. He thought it important and necessary to protest from time to time against the prevailing High Anglican errors, and to emphasize the distinctly Protestant character of the Prayer Book and the Church. He warned the people against becoming entangled in the snares of a sacerdotal system of thought, and of a mechanical and worthless religion. He urged them not to be moved from the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. We curates naturally took up this note and loyally followed his example. We preached occasional sermons on some controverted doctrine of the Church, pointing out what we believed to be error and misconception, and interpreting Scripture and the Prayer Book on strictly Evangelical and Protestant lines.

There was one element which prevailed very strongly amongst the members of our Church, and which had, from the very first, jarred upon my feelings and wounded my susceptibilities. It was a certain air of self-complacency and spiritual self-satisfaction. It always seemed to me as though the members of our congregation were, metaphorically speaking, incessantly patting themselves on the back and congratulating themselves that they were not as other men are. They had somehow become impregnated with what is termed the Doctrine of Final Perseverance, which teaches that all those who have once actually surrendered their souls to Christ are *ipso facto* in a position of permanent and impregnable security, and that it is impossible for them to fall from grace. And it seemed to me, that our people derived from this conviction and consciousness the most unlimited and unreasonable satisfaction. With many of them it had developed into a form of spiritual pride and self-sufficiency tending, in several instances, to a dangerous perversion of the judgment and of fundamental moral perception.

The subject was a deeply important one, and I felt that a fuller and careful examination of it, enabling me to form an accurate judgment and to speak with authority, might be helpful and profitable both to our people and to myself. I had personally no clear view about the matter, having never given it any sustained

thought or attention. My occasional protest so far had been based purely upon my own personal feelings and intuitions.

A careful examination of the statements of the New Testament, in their fair and reasonable interpretation, convinced me very soon that the Doctrine of Final Perseverance, as understood by our people, was not contained in the Scriptures, and could not possibly be deduced from them, except by a most artificial arrangement and adaptation of a certain number of isolated texts. I found that all the best commentators were unanimous in their opinion and pronounced against it. It seemed to me that exceptional care had been taken, both by our Blessed Lord and by the Apostles, to indicate the danger of relapse and the hopeless condition of a soul which had really fallen away. In any case it was abundantly clear, from the statements of St. Paul and from St. John's Epistles, from repeated and solemn warnings contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that a really awakened and regenerated soul could most certainly fall away from Christ. I preached a sermon on the subject, basing my argument upon the emphatic words contained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter vi. 4, *et seq.*

This sermon caused the greatest possible consternation amongst our people, and provoked the most angry and hostile feelings against myself. When I reached

the vestry after the conclusion of the service, dissent was expressed both on the part of my colleagues and the churchwarden who happened to be present, and I became painfully aware that I had most certainly, and in the truest sense of the phrase, "put my foot into it." I had vigorously attacked a cherished belief of both clergy and people, and had gone out of my way to show the un-Scriptural character of their doctrine. It was pointed out to me that my views were contrary to Scriptural truth, and of a peculiarly un-Protestant and dangerous tendency. "They smacked of Popery," in fact, and certainly introduced a savour of that hated sacerdotal system, with its ponderous Sacramental institutions for the discipline and restoration of the human soul.

I was not a little distressed and disconcerted at this unexpected turn of events and at my own strangely anomalous position. To whom was I responsible for the thoughts and ideas I had expressed? To what final authority was I to turn? I had had no views previous to my appeal to Scripture. I had based my statements wholly upon its clear and emphatic pronouncements. Were the clergy and the people superior to this authority? Was it my duty to submit to their judgment? It was impossible to regard the matter as in any sense of secondary importance. It touched a very essential question of the spiritual life and the

nature and effects of sin, and could not consequently be dismissed as admitting of different opinions. I could not conscientiously allow, that the scriptural statements adduced by my colleagues could, in reason, be considered destructive to my argument. They seemed to me to be strained and one-sided, and to be wholly overshadowed by other statements which I had taken pains to quote in their context. I further drew attention to the XVIth Article of Religion, which seemed to me to point in favour of my doctrine, since it implied the possibility of lapse on the part of the baptized and presumably converted.

My colleagues replied that they cared little for the Church's views and the Articles. It was wholly a question of Scripture and of the unanimous belief of real Christians. They held it to be dishonouring to Christ to entertain the mere thought that a truly regenerate soul could fall away from Him. It was simply unthinkable, and Scripture emphatically asserted that Christ "knew His sheep, and that they could not perish nor be plucked out of His hand."

I ventured to point to the Parable of the Vine and the Branches, basing my argument upon the emphatic and plain statement that a branch, even though it be a vital part of the vine and be receiving from it its very life-sap and vigour, may nevertheless wither and die off and be finally cast away. I quoted instances from my

own past experience of people I had known personally, and who had been intimately associated with me, and who had most undoubtedly fallen away from the Faith and become reprobate. But all such arguments were of no avail. Difficulties of the character I named could, in the opinion of my opponents, be explained on the most reasonable assumption that the people to whom I referred had never really believed in Christ, and had consequently never been joined to Him in any immediate and vital way. They had simply lived and acted under a misconception and harboured a fatal delusion.

Of course I wholly and entirely dissented from these views, although I saw no hope whatever of securing either a fair hearing or a reasonable treatment of my own opinions. I therefore appealed to the fundamental doctrine of Protestantism, the right of private judgment in matters of Faith, and insisted that I was justified in exercising it in this present instance. Our Church, as we all admitted, had not pronounced on the matter. Holy Scripture was the true source of doctrine and Rule of Faith, and I was entitled to exercise my judgment and to hold to my interpretation of the Sacred Text. There was manifestly no law which could, in any sense, be said to bind my conscience and my mind. But I did not know then that, like the Constitution of England, the National Church had its *lex non scripta*, its unwritten as well as its written laws, and that an

Anglican Curate has the right of private judgment only in so far as his judgment may be found to correspond with that of his vicar; that it is a fatal offence for him to interpret Holy Scripture without due regard to the feelings and predilections of his flock. I left the Church that day a wiser if not a happier man, and went home to ponder deeply on the mysteries and intricacies of the doctrine and practice of the Church of England.

But it was clear that the matter could not rest there. I could not conceive it possible that God had disclosed an important truth to the world, and that it should nevertheless be practically impossible to ascertain in what that truth precisely consisted. But where was the truth? Where was the seat of authority in the Church? Who could, in this case, decide as to the real character of the Apostolic teaching? It mattered very little to me as to who should in the end get the best of this argument. But it was of the utmost importance to me to know the truth; to ascertain beyond the shadow of a doubt what God had really revealed. To me the statements of Holy Scripture seemed to point one way; to the minds of other earnest men they pointed the other. We could not both be right. Where was the Church? What was really its teaching? Where was the court of final appeal?

There was an earnest layman in the congregation who had in earlier days given some thought to the

matter, and who was keenly interested in the controversy which my sermon had provoked. I discussed with him the different points, and we considered together the statements which could be drawn *pro* and *con* from Holy Scripture. We were both confirmed in our view. At his suggestion we wrote to two prominent clergymen who, on account of their learning and status, were regarded as authorities in the Church ; we begged them to state explicitly the grounds on which they based their conclusions. The answers came in due time. One declared in our favour, the other was against us, and we were no wiser than we had been before.

It has often since seemed to me incomprehensible how men of intelligence and culture, finding themselves face to face with difficulties of this character, can permit themselves to dismiss them from the mind without coming to any satisfactory conclusion respecting them. They are content to assert on the one hand, that a specific Revelation has been given, involving the most far-reaching moral issues, and laying upon the soul a constant and serious responsibility ; and yet, on the other, take it for granted that it is impossible to ascertain finally and fully in what that Revelation really consists and what it is exactly that God requires of us. I feel confident that such an attitude of mind would be impossible in any of the most ordinary affairs

and transactions of human life, and that it would, in its practical application, lead to the most hopeless confusion and chaos. Imagine a General, issuing an order to his men, disobedience and misinterpretation of which he knows to imperil the lives of thousands of his soldiers and possibly the safety of a state, and yet a hopeless impossibility, on the part of his officers and men, to ascertain in what the order precisely consists and what their individual duty is to be. The absurdity of such a thing becomes at once and manifestly apparent. And yet somehow, by a long-continued and transmitted habit of thought, an intellectual and moral anomaly such as I have pointed out, is accepted as a normal and natural condition of a great National Teaching Body and is regarded as a reasonable and defensible attitude of thought. It has always seemed to me that entire rejection of the Christian message, on the ground of its seeming vagueness and indefiniteness, is an infinitely more reasonable state of mind than this extraordinary doctrinal position, in which the mind is torn by conflicting ideas and thrown from point to point in its search after Truth. It is an intelligible position to hold that Christianity consists in the enunciation of great moral truths confirmatory of certain fundamental conceptions latent in the heart, but that it is not in any specific sense a revelation or new disclosure of truth from without. This view ignores two-thirds of the

most important statements of the New Testament, and leaves the best part of the Old hopelessly unintelligible. But it has the merit of a certain degree of logic and consistency of thought, and does no violence to the legitimate exercise of the judgment. It is most certainly the real mental attitude of very many thoughtful minds in the Anglican Church.

It is equally intelligible to accept the view that certain serious statements of Holy Scripture and of the Church are to be received with hesitation and reserve, on the ground that there is reasonable doubt whether they were actually uttered in the form in which they now appear, and that they cannot fairly be interpreted as involving serious consequences and responsibilities: that, in fact, the orthodox conception of the person of Christ is really the after-thought of Theology. This is the view of some modern philosophers, such as Strauss in Germany and Renan in France, and is, on given premises, a logical attitude of thought. But to maintain, as the Anglican Church most certainly maintains, that a specific Revelation has been made to mankind, that it is contained in Holy Scripture and interpreted and expressed in the formularies of the Church, that that Revelation proposes to change man's relation to God and therefore affects the present and future condition of his soul, and may, in the case of rejection, bring with it eternal consequences, and at the same time to declare that the

essential truths of that Revelation cannot be fully and fairly ascertained and must in large measure be made to depend upon the tendencies and predilections of individual minds, is a hopelessly illogical and utterly untenable mode of thought, and will never secure the permanent adherence of really healthy and normally constituted minds. That it exists at all can only be accounted for by the fact, that few minds care to follow out their difficulties to a logical conclusion, and that large numbers of minds are not sufficiently interested to think about it at all.

I have had many opportunities as a clergyman of studying the effects of this anomalous system of belief upon the more devout and intelligent members of Anglican congregations, and I am convinced that it is destructive to the growth of real spiritual religion, and that it causes a most miserable state of stagnation and disorder in the soul. It is the true cause of that moral apathy and indifference which is so distinctive a characteristic of modern Anglican life. The first and necessary postulate, surely, involved in the very claim of a Religion to be a Divine announcement and disclosure, is clearness and distinctness of utterance : the possibility, on man's part, to conform the mind and the will to the law which is enunciated. The heart cannot base its life and reformation upon uncertainty. The mind cannot obey a law which is incessantly escaping its definition

and apprehension. A Revelation can have no permanent claim upon human interest which, in its practical application, turns out to be no Revelation at all. The very conception involves a contradiction. And it is simply begging the question when it is asserted, that there is clearness and definiteness of teaching on the great central truths of the Gospel, and that the obscurity and uncertainty pointed out can only be said to affect minor and not really important points. This is a favourite argument with Anglican divines, and is unquestionably one of the most potent and effective means of concealing the truth from really earnest souls. But it is a mere empty shibboleth, and without any kind of foundation in fact. The most cursory examination of Anglican books, and the most superficial acquaintance with the doctrinal statements of the various schools of thought now flourishing within the pale of the Establishment, demonstrate the falseness and absurdity of this popular plea. There is, it is true, agreement in the use of certain authorized expressions of thought and forms of worship. There is the Order for Morning and Evening Prayer, for the Baptism of Infants, and the Celebration of Holy Communion. Both High Churchmen and Evangelicals employ the same form of words, and so far there certainly is agreement. But the startling diversity of doctrine becomes the more apparent when these

authorized forms are expounded and interpreted, and when they are made to express the mutually destructive views of the different schools and parties in the Church. These diverging views may not unfairly be summarized as follows :—

A. The Prayer Book both asserts and denies Regeneration in Holy Baptism. I have been intimately connected with two prominent Anglican clergymen, of whom one held the first, the other the second position. One emphatically denied the Catholic view as a base superstition and a belief wholly destructive to true spiritual religion. The other maintained it as the very basis and foundation of sound doctrine. Both used the same form of words, and appealed to Holy Scripture in support of their respective beliefs. The first clergyman based all his dogmatic teaching upon the principle that the soul, although baptized, is still unconverted and therefore outside the Divine covenant; the second, upon the Catholic doctrine that a baptized person is most certainly washed and cleansed and placed in a state of salvation.

B. The Prayer Book both asserts and denies any Real Objective Presence of the Lord in the Sacrament of the Supper. It teaches both that the Sacramental Bread and Wine "remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored," and "that the Body and Blood of Christ are

verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper."

The first statement is supported from the Black Rubric at the end of the Communion Service already quoted, and from certain portions of the Articles and the Service itself. The other is deduced from the Catechism and other portions of the Communion Service, and the plain words of both our Lord and the Apostle S. Paul. I have intimate personal friends in the Anglican Church to-day, representative of both schools of thought. Some destroy the remains of consecrated Bread and Wine after Communion by throwing the first to the birds and the second down the sink. Some consume them reverently, and take pains that not a drop should be wasted or left in the cup. Where is the underlying unity of thought? Or is it a minor point of doctrine with which we are here concerned?

But it is unnecessary and unprofitable to continue an argument of this kind. The astonishing thing is, that educated men possessed of reasoning minds and fair judgment can fail to recognize this terrible state of things and can continue to be loyal to a Church which, on the most important truths of the Faith, does not know its own mind. That Church most unquestionably bears upon its features the ineffaceable marks of its purely human character and origin and is a constant

and living witness to the weakness and blindness of the human heart.

I am not now arguing in favour of either the Catholic or the Protestant system of thought. I am not calling in question the integrity and honesty of individual men born into this strange system of confusion and chaos; I am simply pointing to the anomaly presented by a National Church teaching mutually destructive doctrines, and thus unconsciously destroying the first and elementary claims of Revealed Truth. I am asking, Where is truth in the Anglican Church? What is really its authoritative doctrine? If the answer be, "It is impossible or difficult to ascertain it; we must allow for tendencies of thought and give liberty to the individual judgment," then I reply, "You are contradicting the very words of the Gospel. You are propagating ideas which are most directly antagonistic to the entire spirit and tone of the New Testament. You are, moreover, destroying the very elementary claims of the Christian Religion to enter as an enlightening, soul-renewing power into life and to answer the pressing and anxious questions of the human heart. You are undermining the very foundations of spiritual Religion, and playing into the hands of the most dangerous enemies of Christ and His Church." It is this element of vagueness and uncertainty which alienates the minds of intelligent persons from the Christian Faith and

causes the lethargy and stagnation of the soul's life.

These last experiences in my clerical career left impressions upon my mind which were never afterwards entirely effaced. I became increasingly conscious of a feeling of the most intense dissatisfaction and disquietude. I sought in vain to solve the doubts and perplexities which were distressing my mind. But my immediate moral and social environments obscured my judgment and blunted the edge of my intellectual sensibilities. Under the influences of my daily practical work my difficulties never assumed an acute form, and I found it possible to continue the active exercise of my ministry without any conscious hurt or opposition to the dictates of my conscience.

Not long after this, however, my confidence in the reasonableness of the Anglican position received a further and more severe blow. Our teaching, as I have already pointed out, both in the pulpit and in the more direct exercise of our ministry, was chiefly based upon a textual use of the New Testament. We had all of us an instinctive distrust of the Book of Common Prayer, and looked upon it as one would upon some ancient curiosity, which may with safety be taken out for occasional inspection but which does not bear a close examination or practical use. And we had succeeded in imparting this feeling to the larger portion of our

congregation. Both in the Sunday School and at the different weekly classes held for religious instruction, the Bible was used as our chief text-book and source of Doctrine, and the Prayer Book was almost entirely ignored. It is no difficult matter to defend this procedure from the VIth Article of the Anglican Church, which declares that "Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation," &c. The chief doctrine underlying all our teaching was that of conversion: the necessity, for every person coming to years of discretion, of being converted in the most real and personal meaning of that term. The doctrine of Baptism very naturally found little or no place in such a system of Theology. It was almost entirely excluded and lost sight of. One of my colleagues unhesitatingly taught the people that Baptism was a mere form and outward sign and therefore not really necessary in the case of converted adults. And since it was clear from Holy Scripture that the dying thief could not have been baptized, and that those really joined to Christ could not fall away, every truly converted man had an absolute moral certainty of his salvation. We were deeply impregnated with the dangerous character of the explicit words respecting the Regeneration of Infants in Holy Baptism, and took pains to eradicate the very thought from the minds of the children periodically passing through our hands in preparation for Confirmation.

Simple as all this seemed to me and assenting to it as I did in a certain sort of way, I was again and again conscious of intellectual difficulties. It was a frequent source of distress to me, that it should be my duty to impress Scriptural truths upon the minds of the children which I distinctly felt to be at variance with those expressed in the Prayer Book, and at the same time to insist upon a loyal acceptance of the latter as containing sound doctrine, agreeable to the words of Holy Scripture. It always seemed to me too much like tampering with the normal functions of the natural judgment, and like a sowing of the seeds of doubt and uncertainty in the young heart. It was surely a hopeless confusion of ideas to make a child state, in answer to a question, that it has in Baptism become "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven," and then to point out with equal clearness that, on the most certain warrants of Holy Scripture, it has really become nothing of the kind. What effect, I asked myself, was such teaching likely to have on a simple mind; on what rational principle could it hereafter hope to extricate itself out of the difficulty thus created? Still, such was the distinct and authoritative teaching given in our Church and parish, and these doctrines our people most unreservedly received and believed.

We had connected with our Church large and flourishing Parochial Schools. They were the pride of the

vicar and received our constant and undivided interest and attention. We were on excellent terms with the superintendents and teachers who co-operated with us most loyally in every good work. It was part of the ordinary duty of the clergy to give regular weekly instruction in the schools and to ground the children in the Catechism and the distinctive doctrines and practices of the Church. The headmaster or mistress were generally present when these instructions were given in their respective departments, and it was my practice, at the conclusion of a lesson, to invite their comments and suggestions with a view to attaining greater proficiency in what I considered to be a most important and difficult work.

I had one morning examined my class on the Catechism and had endeavoured to illustrate from the statements of Holy Scripture what I believed to be the teaching of the Church respecting Baptism. I had given the received Evangelical interpretation of the words of the Prayer Book as it is given to thousands of Protestant children throughout the length and breadth of the land. At the close of my lesson the headmaster came to me with a troubled and perplexed face and begged me to explain to him more fully what I had stated in mere outline to the children. He somehow could not fit in what I had said with the views he had himself long held and taught in the schools. After

some further and agitated talk, I discovered, to my intense amazement, that our schoolmaster had always firmly believed the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration and had unhesitatingly taught it to the children under his care. There had never been any doubt or misgiving in his mind. The statements of the Prayer Book had seemed to him clear and conclusive, and he knew of nothing in Scripture that could be quoted as contradicting these views. The ideas expressed in my lesson, therefore, appeared to him to contradict all that he had hitherto held and taught. Now we clergy had always had most implicit faith in the sound orthodoxy of our schoolmaster and at certain times, when exceptional claims were made upon us, the religious instruction in the schools had been left entirely to him. There must therefore have been the most striking divergence in our teaching, and what could have been the effect on the minds of the children?

But to me this involved again a far deeper and more disquieting question. Where was Truth? What was really the teaching of my Church? Were the children of Christian parents regenerated in Baptism and placed in a state of salvation or were they not? What did the Church mean to convey by the words of the Prayer Book? What should a child be taught to think and to believe?

Again I am not now speaking in favour of either one

or the other of these diverging doctrinal views. I am showing, from the actual facts of experience, that the Church of England has no clear doctrine on the most fundamental and important truths of the Faith, and that it speaks with a faltering voice and a stammering tongue, leaving the mind in a state of hopeless confusion and perplexity. And what is the practical use of a Teaching Body which has nothing definite to teach? What legitimate right can it be said to have to be called a Church? What is actually the effect of its teaching upon the minds and hearts of the people to whom it claims to have been sent? It sows, I am certain, from the very first, the seed of confusion and uncertainty in the minds of its children and lays the foundation for the aftergrowth of that religious Babel which disfigures the moral life of this land and provokes the ridicule and contempt of the unbelieving multitude. Oh! that men would be brave enough to face these terrible but incontrovertible facts and in the supreme interest of Religion and Truth accord fair play to their normal judgment and intelligence. Was there ever a more striking fulfilment of the words of the Prophet: "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jeremiah v. 30, 31).

This discovery which I had thus unexpectedly made

led again to a fierce and prolonged controversy which, however, happily remained confined to the clerical sphere. We clergy had many long walks and constant discussion ; we made a study of the famous "Gorham controversy," and consulted many authors of repute and learning. But, needless to say, our respective attitudes remained practically unchanged. The vicar and one of my colleagues were strong on the silence of Scripture respecting Infant Baptism and equally strong in their opposition to the deliberate utterances of the Prayer Book. My second colleague reserved his judgment ; but expressed it as his opinion that the Prayer Book "wanted reforming." He thought that if a baptized child, in after years, gave signs of spiritual life, it might be reasonably assumed to have been really regenerated in Baptism, but that in the absence of any such sign, the presumption was wholly the other way. Our schoolmaster refrained from expressing his ultimate personal views of the matter. I was utterly wretched and thoroughly dissatisfied in my mind, and seized every opportunity of escaping my weekly duties at the Parochial Schools.

In now reflecting, after the lapse of years, upon these strange and deeply distressing experiences, I cannot but feel how very fatally an early bias is apt to prejudice the mind against the most simple and most obvious of truths. Here are educated men wrangling and disput-

ing over a very simple thing and using the sharpest controversial weapons in the vain hope that they will thus enforce their unreasonable and unnatural conclusions. And what is really the essential point which is in dispute? It is denied that God is able to effect, by His own Sacramental act, what any preacher claims to be incessantly effecting by the words of his mouth. It is thought unreasonable that God should, on the terms of His covenant, elevate the soul of a child free from actual sin, to the supernatural sphere. They will not believe it unless they can have the evidence of the senses and witness what they have come to regard as "indubitable signs of conversion." They are, as a matter of fact, seriously offended that such an intensely material thing as water should have been introduced into the matter at all, encouraging as it does a purely external and mechanical Religion. They think it well, therefore, to impose certain kinds of reform and to substitute a purer and, as they imagine, a less material Gospel for the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It was difficult for me to entirely conceal the feelings of uncertainty and dissatisfaction which had now taken possession of me. I was beginning to lose my interest in my work in the parish, and a kind of paralysis seemed to be creeping over my mental life. I became vague and hesitating in my teaching and, in my intercourse with my colleagues, I made a point of avoiding

as far as possible any direct discussion of doctrinal matters. As a very natural consequence they began to distrust me and to become suspicious of me. They probably felt instinctively, that I was not very sound in the Faith and that some force, hostile to Evangelical Truth, was working in my mind. One of my colleagues hinted strongly that there was, after all, the possibility of even an ordained man never having been properly converted and remaining in consequence without "the full assurance of his salvation." The entire religious atmosphere in which I lived began to oppress me. I felt that I was becoming morbid in my thoughts and apt to exaggerate my scruples, and that a change of scene and environment might help to sweep away the cobwebs hanging over my mental life. My two years had very nearly run out, and I therefore wrote to my Bishop placing the resignation of my curacy in his hands.

But what was now the real state of my mind? What was the practical result of my reading? Had I formed any definite views respecting the Scriptures and the Church? It is exceedingly difficult to fully and fairly analyze any thoughts and impressions that may at any time be latent in the mind, or to estimate the degree to which a certain chain of reasoning may have influenced and constrained the judgment. I have the most vivid recollection of an effort to disentangle conflicting lines

of thought and of a struggle of the normal tendencies of my mind with what was beginning to appear to me incontrovertible Truth. A little incident occurring at this time may throw some light upon my then attitude of thought and show in what direction my mind was travelling.

A clergyman with whom I happened to be in conversation made some reference to the blessings secured to English Christianity by the free and unhindered study of the Sacred Scriptures by the people, and its generous and constant use by the clergy in all forms of public instruction. I became interested in the subject and, being for the moment off my guard, gave utterance to the thoughts which were really in my mind. I expressed it as my deliberate conviction that the free use of Holy Scripture, as practised by the Anglican Church and by the Dissenting bodies, was attended by considerable spiritual danger and was practically the source of all the differences of thought and confusion of doctrine by which our modern Christian life was disfigured and paralyzed. The look of horror on my friend's face, when I made this unguarded confession of belief, roused me to a sense of my position and for the first time brought me face to face with the radical transformation which was going on in my mind. I had expressed my belief in what my friend and the Protestant Sects have ever regarded as the chief error

underlying the Romish system and I had fortified my position with common-sense argument based upon my personal experiences. I was consequently in opposition to the most elementary principles of Protestantism, although I had as yet scarcely become aware of the fact myself. But this was most certainly the fixed attitude of my mind at this time. This was as far as I had got. It was in a sense a negative position, but it involved, by a logical process of thought, many other important considerations. These may be briefly summarized as follows:—

1. I was practically convinced that the Holy Scriptures could never, because of their very form and character, become a permanent and final court of appeal in matters of Doctrine. Facts and experience were continually destroying this claim. My colleagues and I had resorted to this supposed source of Doctrine and Revealed Truth and had arrived at wholly dissimilar conclusions. Both they and I were equally sincere and anxious to discover the Truth. How could that be an ultimate authority which gave forth so manifestly uncertain a sound, whose pronouncement admitted of mutually destructive interpretation?

And it was clear that our own experiences, in our comparatively small sphere of religious work, were only typical of the greater differences of thought which disturbed and agitated the larger sphere of the Protestant

world and its Societies without. The numerous Sects, as well as the Anglican Church, based their beliefs and systems upon the statements of Holy Writ, and made these the source of their teaching and practice. Sacred Scripture, therefore, was made to support the doctrines of Unitarians and Trinitarians, of Anglicans and Presbyterians, of Wesleyans and Baptists, of Plymouth Brethren and Quakers, of the hundred and one smaller sects which make their claims and voices heard in this Christian land. It was manifestly absurd to say that these were all of one mind, excepting minor and unimportant points. It was certain that they differed from each other fundamentally and on the most serious and important truths of the Faith, and that very frequently one was engaged in a most determined and uncompromising effort to convert or overshadow the other. In what rational sense, then, could Holy Scripture be said to be a Rule of Faith and a final court of appeal?

2. It had further become clear to me that the Scriptures themselves did not really make any such claim. The texts usually adduced as pointing in this direction were for the most part misinterpreted and misapplied. Some of them, constantly quoted by Protestants, could not possibly apply to the New Testament Writings at all. Closer examination showed the Sacred Documents to be fragmentary and supplemental in character, not intended

to establish the Faith, but to confirm it and bear witness to it—to state at fuller length and in a permanent form what was already fully known and believed.

It is certainly a never-ceasing cause of wonder to me that this transparent fact is not recognized by every mind the moment it is pointed out. I cannot imagine by what rational means it is possible to evade it. It is not really a matter of opinion at all, a thing for scholars and students to consider and to determine ; it is a matter of ordinary common sense and of plain historical fact. Some of the New Testament Writings are purely personal and private documents, whose origin, humanly speaking, was accidental. They are not written to announce the truths of Revelation, but to permanently record them and bear witness to them : to state in fuller detail some of the more important incidents connected with their promulgation. They constantly assume that the truths referred to are already known and understood, and there is not a scrap of internal evidence to show that the writers constructed them for any other purpose. The Letters to the Churches and the Pastoral Epistles only incidentally and by inference set forth the truths of the Christian Faith, and do not in any sense warrant the use which Protestantism makes of them to-day. That this is so becomes clear from the most superficial examination and is a fact that would, I am sure, be accepted by every normally constituted mind, could

it but free itself from the fatal bias which hinders its natural and normal manifestation.

And surely such a discovery cannot be said to decrease the value of the Holy Book, or to lessen its importance as the Great Text-Book of the Christian Church. It merely gives it its proper place and rightful position, and defines *in what sense* it may be regarded as containing and teaching the great truths of the Faith.

Thus the Gospel of S. Luke is a purely personal document, written for the benefit of one Theophilus, and "that he might know the certainty of those things wherein he had been instructed." S. Jude exhorts the Christians to contend earnestly for "the Faith once delivered to the Saints." S. Paul preaches "the Faith which he once destroyed;" he warns Timothy that in the latter days some shall depart from "the Faith," and says of others that "concerning the Faith they have made shipwreck." In all these statements it is constantly assumed that those to whom they are addressed already possess the Faith and with it, we may presume, a sound rule of Doctrine and teaching. And if this be so how did they receive it; by what method was it imparted to them? By written word or Scriptures? Impossible, because these did not as yet exist in their completed form. It was a laborious and expensive task to multiply manuscripts; very few

persons could have had access to them even if they had existed. But no single Epistle or Letter refers to any such written document; not from one of them could it be inferred that manuscripts or Scriptures were intended to become, after the Apostolic age, the Rule of Faith and the source of sound Doctrine in the Christian Church.

3. And this view of the matter seemed to me to receive additional confirmation in the fact, now coming home with great force to my mind, that the Books of Holy Scripture had only gradually been gathered together, and that it must have been impossible, for several centuries at least, to determine definitely and fully what was Scripture and what was not. But what had been the final court of appeal while Christians were making up their minds, while they were considering the claims to inspiration and genuineness of the different Writings? What principle had guided them in their selection? To what authority, for instance, did a Christian of the second century appeal in any difficulty or doubt respecting Doctrine? It was obvious that there must have been some such standard of Orthodoxy, some witness to Truth by which the claims of the several books to Divine Inspiration could be tested, and which would make it possible to determine whether they should or should not be included in the Sacred Canon. But where and what was this authority anterior to

Scripture, and consequently higher than Scripture? Where and in what Body could it be said to reside in the present day? The Christian world manifestly stood in great need of it to-day, in greater need, perhaps, than in the very earliest days of the Church, and throughout those dark and troubled days during which the Sacred Canon of Holy Scripture was being formed. Where was this infallible Divine Authority to which difficulties like mine could be referred and by which they could be satisfactorily settled?

It will now be seen in what direction my mind had been at work. It had as yet reached no solid ground, and had accepted no distinctly Catholic doctrine. I was feeling about in the dark amidst the snares and pitfalls of error, catching only reflected glimpses of the Truth. I was unconsciously destroying the foundations of sand upon which I had hitherto rested, and clearing away the obstacles which were excluding the light. There was nothing new or striking in the simple facts which were beginning to dominate my mind. I had known them all along. They had faced me in my study of the early history of the Church. But by that curious and inexplicable action of an early bias I had never really assimilated them, or in any sense realized to what inferences they logically led: the bearing they had upon the simple question of "Authority" and "the Church." They now came home to me with all their

crushing logic and force, and left me wondering how I could so long have failed to recognize their exceeding significance and importance.

4. Again, I had become more fully confirmed in my sense of the need of certainty in matters of Revealed Religion. The plausible phrases so liberally in use amongst the Protestant Clergy did not satisfy my mind. They looked to me very much like throwing dust into the eyes of the understanding. I saw this need of certainty underlying all the deeper questions of the human heart, and now and then rising to the surface even in minds apparently confirmed in some Protestant version of Divine Truth. In the sphere of Natural Religion, uncertainty was reasonable and might be expected; the heart was in a large measure left to its own conjectures and experiences; it was the purely subjective aspect of Religion. Revelation demanded clearness and certainty. The very name implied the idea. I could not conceive of any Revelation coming from without and binding the conscience, and yet leaving the mind in doubt respecting the things on which it claimed to have come to throw light. It would have been easier for me, intellectually, to reject the Revelation altogether than to receive it on such terms. I could not see how any spiritual life or transformation of character could be built up and made to rest permanently on such a foundation.

And it was abundantly clear that the New Testament writers as well as the early Christians had had this certainty. The day of Pentecost and its after effects could leave no doubt on this point. They had had their struggles and difficulties, their conflicts with the lower tendencies of their nature; but they could not have had intellectual doubt based upon the uncertain character of fundamental Christian Doctrine. The Fathers, too, of the early Church, the Martyrs and Confessors had known no doubt, as their lives and writings, their calm demeanour in life and death, most amply testified. But where was the source of this moral certainty to-day; on what system or distinctive form of doctrine could it be said to depend?

5. I had further cleared my mind, I think, with regard to that question formulated in the earlier portion of this chapter. It was not necessary to go beyond the New Testament. We were living under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. Christ, when He passed out of the sight of mortal eyes, had Himself indicated the changed form of His future activity. We had, strictly speaking, no right to use the Gospels in the way in which we did, applying their contents *without distinction* to ourselves to-day. They recorded the manner of His work *when in this world*, and the method of His action upon human consciences in the days of His flesh. They recorded the level Divine Revelation had reached *before* the day

of Pentecost. Since then Christ had ascended into Heaven, the Holy Ghost had come, the Divine Society had been founded, and it was by the Spirit's action upon that Society that His influence was now going forth into the world. It was not any sin against Christ the Lord, but the sin against the Holy Ghost, which had no forgiveness.

And what our Lord personally, and in the days of His flesh, conveyed by the touch of His hand or the breath of His mouth, He now conveyed by Sacramental Acts, making these the vehicles for imparting "His life" to human souls. But these visible means and Sacraments implied a visible Body, duly constituted guardians and keepers, a central Authority guaranteeing watchful care and protection.

I was fast parting, it will be seen, with the impossible Protestant doctrine of the Invisible Church. A faint vision of the Holy Roman and Catholic Church, as I know her to-day, with her ordered Priesthood, her central Authority, her guardian keepers, her unity of doctrine, her never-ceasing life and witness throughout the ages, passed over my mind and flooded my soul with light. But alas! I knew her not; I could not have called her by that name. My entire conception was still abstract in character, and my own soul slumbering securely. Fatal educational bias was holding my eyes. I was feeling about for support in

the dim-lit cave of Anglicanism, and only wounding and bruising my hands and my feet. But all the while I had hold of the golden thread leading through the labyrinth of human error into the fulness and freedom of Divine Truth, and I know now that that golden thread was even then in God's hand.

III.

MY SECOND CURACY.

A PROLONGED holiday tour on the Continent, undertaken in the company of an old and much valued friend, brought new interests and impressions into my life and, in a measure, directed my thoughts into entirely different channels. I was anxious not to become morbid and one-sided in the matter of my religious inquiry and perhaps in the end deprive my mind of the power of gauging the actual force of a moral difficulty, and of rightly discerning the true proportion of things. I was very fond of my profession and more than anxious to return as soon as possible to some active and interesting sphere of work. I was therefore only too strongly disposed to make light of my religious perplexity and to cherish the feeling that it would sooner or later dissolve itself away and leave me wondering how I could ever have allowed it to distress me. My friend, an earnest

Anglican, who held a "moderately high" doctrine, but who had never known intellectual difficulties, encouraged this feeling and, by mutual consent, we avoided the discussion of controverted points of Religion. But the subject was never wholly absent from my mind. In a vague undefined sort of way I was becoming increasingly conscious that the difficulty was really a very formidable one, and that I should find it no easy matter to discover a satisfactory way out of it.

I could not see how the mutually antagonistic doctrinal positions in the Church of England could be reconciled and how, on such principles, its claim to be the divinely constituted teacher of the people could be reasonably maintained. But I gave no expression to this suspicion, which was causing me considerable disquietude; and when, in my daily intercourse with my friend, religious questions came up for discussion, my attitude was that of an inquirer who was inviting help and suggestion from another thoughtful and really deeply devout mind. My holiday trip, however, remained not wholly without influence upon the development of my religious ideas, and not without still further accentuating the unsettling thoughts which were at work in my mind. We visited a great many of the more interesting Protestant and Catholic churches of the places through which we passed, and saw a good deal of the religious

life of the Continent. We were both greatly struck with the barrenness and lifelessness of German Protestantism, and with the very pronounced and universal indifference of the people at large to all questions of the religious and spiritual life. The Protestant churches which we visited were always closed and inaccessible to the general public on weekdays, and they were open but almost entirely empty on Sundays. The microscopic congregations which assembled in them were invariably composed of the poorer and uneducated classes, who seemed to manifest little or no interest in the proceedings. In one of the bigger towns only did we meet with a fairly large and really interested and attentive congregation.

The better classes of the people made no secret of their attitude towards the Church and Religion. They seemed to look upon faith in Christ and obedience to His laws in life and worship as an antiquated and, in these modern days, wholly impossible form of thought for all really cultivated men ; and regarded the Scriptures as a very interesting collection of ancient documents, but without any kind of higher claim upon the heart and the conscience. I could never quite discover whether they retained some lingering faith in Jesus as a Divine Person and a Saviour. They seemed to me to conceive of Him as a great teacher and moral reformer, who had come to give expression to important

moral truths, but whose doctrine was wholly misunderstood by His immediate followers and certainly perverted and corrupted by the superstitiously inclined people of "those dark primitive ages." I was assured again and again by educated and thoughtful persons—and indeed the circumstances surrounding us witnessed only too strongly to the truth of their assertion—that this attitude of thought was a normal element in the moral life of the German people, and that orthodox religion was almost wholly confined to the lower and illiterate classes. They seemed to regard it as a truism that in proportion as the mind advances in intellectual culture is it bound to part with the ideas and conceptions of historical and orthodox Christianity.

I believe that the impressions which I formed at this time as to the real character of Continental Protestantism are, on the whole, correct; and they will, I think, be corroborated by those who have practical experience of the matter, or who have themselves resided for any length of time in Protestant parts of Germany. It seemed to me a fact admitting of no doubt, that the Protestant Religion had long ceased to be in any sense a moral force in the social life of the German people of our time, and that rationalistic modes of thought had effaced all distinctive belief in the supernatural origin and character of the Christian Revelation.

These undeniable facts presented a very serious

problem to my mind, and engaged my constant and searching interest. What was the cause of this striking phenomenon? On what principle could it be reasonably explained? We were in the heart of a Protestant country, amongst a people who had shaken off the "Romish yoke," and who had declared in favour of a purer and, as they believed, more primitive doctrine and worship. They had made fearful sacrifices to recover the free use of Holy Scripture, and with it the right of exercising their own judgment upon its doctrines and teaching. They stood that very day in proud and boastful antagonism to the "superstitious and childish follies" of the Roman Church. But what was the actual effect of this boasted freedom of thought; in what had the free use of the Scriptures and the exercise of private judgment really resulted? The German Protestants had practically lost the Faith, they had thrown aside that Book which they thought they were so anxious to possess, and had shaken off the restraints of any distinctive spiritual law and religion. They had, in fact, ceased to be Christian in the actual historic acceptation of that term. Was this a necessary and unavoidable effect of the private use and interpretation of Holy Scripture and of the abrogation of all external authority? Was the Protestant principle the source of dissension and disunion, of an endless conflict of opinion, of a final entire rejection of the Faith? Would this be

the ultimate effect of the Protestant Reformation in England? Were there unmistakable signs already pointing in that direction?

We also visited the Catholic churches in Protestant districts; we were present at different functions and services at all hours of the day. The churches were always accessible. We found in them almost always serious and devout worshippers of all classes of the people. High Mass was invariably attended by large and attentive congregations, who were manifestly in deep earnest in the matter of their religion. And these congregations were made up of the rich and the poor, of the ignorant and educated classes, of young and old. There they were at all hours of the day, kneeling in silent prayer before some sacred shrine or altar, outside some confessional box, or in wrapt adoration before the Sacramental Presence of the Saviour enshrined on the High Altar; but at all times with a manifest consciousness of the unseen world and of the reality of the Christian Mysteries: with an evident belief in the real presence and the Divine claim and character of Jesus the Christ and Saviour of mankind.

The contrast was very striking, and could scarcely fail to impress a sensitive and thoughtful mind. It made a very powerful impression upon that of my friend. But how could the phenomenon be explained? How was it that the Protestant system, with its open Bible and its

freedom of thought, led to confusion and indifference and final unbelief, and that the "Roman superstition" preserved the integrity of the Faith, and with it sustained the spiritual life and devotion of the people?

I made no attempt to answer these questions. I scarcely ventured to formulate them clearly in my mind. My eyes were still holden, because my time had not yet come.

On my return to England I had the offer of an attractive curacy in a parish not very far from London which, in the opinion of my friends, offered a sphere of real usefulness to a man of my temperament and qualifications. I must admit that I had some very serious doubts on this point myself, having incidentally heard of local conflicts and of the exceptionally difficult position of the church; but, after repeated interviews with the incumbent and consultation with local friends, my doubts were overcome and I accepted the offer.

My new vicar was what is known in the clerical world as an Evangelical Churchman. He held old-fashioned Evangelical principles which, however, never assumed a direct and obtrusive form. He was the very embodiment of sober, respectable, easy-going, modern-day Christianity, with a keen sense of the social advantages and prestige and of the immaculate dignity attaching to a beneficed

clergyman of the National Church. He held what he termed "Prayer Book views" on the Sacraments, and had a perfect horror of anything approaching to what he designated "emotional religion." He was a man of a most imperturbable calm, which seemed to permeate both his inner and his outer life, and which had imprinted itself upon his work in the parish and the church. He thoroughly believed in taking things easy and in maintaining, by a dignified bearing and attitude, that respect which he considered to be due to "the cloth." He was kind and genial as a man, always courteous and pleasant in his manner but, as I soon discovered, an entire failure as a clergyman. He was hopelessly and absolutely out of touch with his people, some of whom disliked him intensely and had made repeated attempts to get rid of him. He made a point of strenuously resisting any attempt on their part to raise the tone of the religious life of the parish, and to make the Church in any marked way a power for good in the district. A large proportion of his Evangelical congregation really distrusted him, and believed him to be a Ritualist in disguise. They warned me earnestly, soon after my advent in the parish, to be watchful of his doings and tendencies, and not to support any kind of "upward" movement he might hereafter be disposed to suggest to me. They invited me to a meeting held at the house of a leading member of the congregation, where I discovered, to my astonish-

ment, that prayer had for some time past been offered up weekly for "the vicar's conversion."

The religious condition of the district was a most curious and peculiar one. There were three prominent churches in the town, and each had its distinctive and well-defined religious and social sphere. The chief church, commanding the dominating local influence and the largest congregation, was extremely ritualistic. The then incumbent was a man of the most pronounced High Church type, who held the "Continuity" theory respecting the Anglican Church, and who looked upon the Reformation and its doctrines as an unmitigated evil, from the effects of which men like himself were called to rescue the National Church. He taught almost all Catholic doctrine—Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Prayers for the Dead and to the Saints; and he made supreme efforts to induce his people to come to him for Sacramental Confession. This "upward" movement had been going on for some time, and its final development had only gradually been attained. A large proportion of the congregation had taken to it kindly and at once; a few had expressed their disapproval and dissent, but had allowed themselves to be persuaded by the genial personality of their pastor; some had fled from the church in horror, and had declared open and uncompromising war against it. But the church had somehow become the dominating religious power in the district,

and had succeeded in making its influences, for good or evil, very universally and unmistakably felt.

The second local church occupied a somewhat different position. It was "moderately high" in doctrine. The incumbent had strong leanings towards broad principles. He affected a certain learned tone and manner in his preaching and conversation, and a discreet reserve on specific doctrinal points. He made a study of the popular reviews and magazines, and was fond of discoursing on "modern tendencies of thought." He was invariably spoken of in the parish as "slippery" and "colourless," and many looked upon him with unconcealed suspicion and distrust. Still the teaching of the church was distinctly high, although the incumbent himself frequently repudiated any distinct adherence to sacerdotal principles, and had been known to speak with regret of the distressing doings of his colleague and near neighbour.

The church to which I had been appointed was supposed to represent distinctly Protestant and Evangelical thought. It had a tradition of never having wavered, until the advent of the present vicar, in whole-hearted loyalty to Reformation principles. It had hitherto borne faithful witness to Scriptural truth and to the truly Protestant character of the Anglican Church. But, with the changed *régime* of a new vicar and the local ritualistic influences, changes had also passed over the

spiritual atmosphere of this parish, and the church had begun to give an uncertain sound. The vicar was Evangelical by profession and occasional utterance, but he was scarcely loyally Protestant. He had a strong and, to his Protestant parishioners, incomprehensible affection for the Prayer Book and the constituted authorities of the Church. He was, moreover, known to have associated with Ritualists and to have expressed unmitigated contempt for Dissenters. The church, on the other hand, had become the home of all the malcontents of the district. Some had fled to it from the advancing enemy in the shape of ritualistic reform; some had sought refuge in it from the perils of liberal principles of thought; some had come because they were Protestant churchmen, and were determined to assert their constitutional and inalienable rights. All clamoured for the recognition of their particular fads and idiosyncrasies. A certain portion of the congregation were incessantly urging the vicar to "move up," and to introduce a more attractive and musical form of worship; others were determined to preserve a Protestant simplicity, and to resist the faintest attempt at ritual or innovation. The vicar occupied a most unenviable position in the midst of these streams of heterogeneous and conflicting elements. His attitude was that of compromise. He endeavoured to please all and in consequence he pleased none. He was too churchy

and reticent for the Protestant portion of his congregation, too timid and undecided for those with high or broad tendencies. He was invariably in trouble with one party or the other, and parochial storms were always in the air. There was in our life and work that ceaseless undercurrent of hostile influences which fatally hindered and marred any attempt at really useful and permanent work.

It will be readily understood, that I was filled with dismay when I discovered the actual state of things in this parish. What was the unkindly fate that had led me to this place? I was anxious to work and not to fight, to disperse my doubts of the tenableness of the Anglican position, not to confirm them by further witnessing the disintegrating influence of the leaven of private opinion at work in the Church. I felt that, considering the unsettled state of my mind, I was the person least qualified to occupy so difficult and harassing a post. How could I hope to work happily with such distracting influences surrounding me, with Christian men and women biting and devouring one another because of their differences of belief, and with a very chaos of discordant voices incessantly sounding in my ears both inside and outside my own parish and church?

But how imperfect is our natural judgment, how very one-sided our knowledge of God's dealings with the human soul! I have now not a shadow of doubt, that

it was His kindly hand which had led me to this place, and which had caused my soul to pass through this unexpected tribulation. It was most certainly a discipline which could not be spared me. It brought me face to face with the conditions of the National Church as it really is at this present time, and enabled me to see for myself how entirely it has ceased to be in any intelligible sense a witness for Truth and the religious guide of the people of this land. I cannot but feel that, humanly speaking, my conversion to the Catholic Church might have been delayed for years and my religious struggles indefinitely prolonged, had I been sent to some different sphere of work, where the differences of religious opinions were less marked, and the hopelessness and untenableness of the Anglican position less clearly illustrated. Most of us know from the actual facts of experience, how largely the accidental conditions of life, and our social and moral environments, determine our religious position and bias our judgment, and how extremely difficult it is to run counter to an accepted and universally received view of things. It is only on this principle, that it is possible to understand how intelligent and devout Christian men and women can find it possible to defend a state of things in their Church which is not only offensive to reason, but hopelessly destructive to the most elementary and necessary claims of a Revealed Religion. It is

very probable that, had I not been appointed to this curacy, my doubts might have been silenced for years by the plausible arguments which are in such liberal use in the Anglican Church, and which are said to satisfy so many intelligent minds; I might at this present time be still wandering about in the maze of human error and heresy, estranged and alienated from my Father's house.

After an experience of several months in this my new sphere of work, I begged very earnestly to be released from my duties. I explained, to the best of my ability, that I was in no sense fitted for so difficult and responsible a position, and that I had personally the most intense dislike to a life of incessant religious conflict and warfare. I pointed out to my vicar what appeared to me to be the greatest and, so far as I could judge, insuperable difficulties in the way of a successful working of the parish. But I was vainly seeking to escape my destiny. My vicar resolutely declined to accept my resignation, and expressed it as his opinion, that it was my duty to remain at my post and to do the work God had given me to do to the very best of my ability, leaving all results and consequences with Him. I had, in his opinion, already secured the esteem and affection of the greater portion of the congregation, had shown tact and good judgment in one or two difficult matters, and it would be a grievous injury to the Church and want

of respect to the congregation were I now to leave my work and sever my connection with the parish. I begged for time to consider the matter and, by God's help, to ascertain my duty with respect to myself as well as to the Church and the people, and I was for some days torn by conflicting feelings and desires. But "circumstances" again gained the victory. Friends and parishioners seemed to see my distinct call to the work and the duty of my self-effacement, and I remained.

But on what principle was I now to construct my future work? What was to be the tone and character of my teaching? The vicar practically repudiated all personal responsibility and gave me *carte blanche* in the fullest possible acceptation of that term. One thing seemed clear to me as admitting of no possible doubt. Our difficulties were due to the fact that our Church gave an uncertain sound. The people were confused and unsettled, and no one knew what the vicar really believed. His passive attitude had greatly increased his difficulties. The other local churches had a distinct and defined doctrinal position, and the congregations had shaped themselves accordingly. Malcontents had gradually been weeded out and, within their own sphere at least, they had peace. The clergy were able to consolidate their work and to build up their people. Our only prospect of success lay in following their example.

It was our duty to be clear and emphatic in our teaching, and to leave no doubt in any mind as to our doctrinal attitude and position. And the difficulty was not such a very great one after all. The church had long been known for its Evangelical traditions and its defence of Protestant principles; the larger number of its members had strong Evangelical sympathies; none were ritualistically inclined in any very pronounced way. The vicar believed in the Prayer Book and in the Church, but he also believed in the free use of the Scriptures and in "sound doctrine"; he only associated with the High Church clergy secretly and on social and professional grounds. It is true he had his suspicions of the moral value of some of the Reformation deeds; but he did not despise the Reformation and regret it, as my earlier clerical friend did. If, therefore, the vicar could be persuaded to take up a definite attitude at all, it could only be in the direction of Evangelicalism and reasonable Reformation principles, indirectly antagonistic naturally to the sacerdotal and ritualistic system of thought.

And what other attitude could I possibly take up? I briefly surveyed once more the entire position, and however difficult and perplexing the larger question might be, there remained no doubt on my mind as to my present duty. The measure of my conviction was manifestly the measure of my responsibility, more

especially in a Church which defended the right of private judgment. I had so far failed to discover the seat of authority in the Church, the Rule of Faith, anterior and exterior to Holy Scripture; but, in any case, the High Church Party did not possess it. They too had their divisions and disagreements, and did not themselves know what they meant when they spoke of "the Church." The clergy appealed to their Bishop or were called to order by him in matters of doctrine and practice; but they invariably disobeyed their Bishop when he happened to decide against them. The Bishops hopelessly disagreed amongst themselves on fundamental doctrines, some emphatically warning against the errors of the others. The Ritualistic claim to authority, therefore, was a manifest absurdity; it resolved itself into individual authority, based on personal beliefs and convictions. And that was the Reformation principle in attractive disguise.

One other thing was further absolutely certain in my mind. Ritualism and the sacerdotal system had no honest and logical standing ground in the Anglican Church. The very existence of the National Church was due to the Reformation, and to the constant protest against the Pre-Reformation doctrine. The Articles of Religion were clear on this point, absolutely emphatic and uncompromising. If other clergymen could solemnly assent to them in the presence of God and subsequently

preach the doctrine which they were specially constructed to repudiate, I could not. Their position seemed to me grotesque and flagrantly dishonest, a deliberate tampering with elementary moral principles. The facts of history and the entire traditions of the Anglican Church further witnessed against the Ritualistic position and convinced me that the bubble was sure to burst some day, when the public mind could be got to fairly appreciate and understand the argument from history. There was to my mind no continuity in the Anglican Church in any intelligible sense. The Reformers, I felt sure, would have scorned the very thought. The Pre-Reformation Church was Catholic and Papal: that of Henry the VIIIth royal and local. The latter was an absolutely new creation both in doctrine and principle.

There remained the difficulty of the Prayer Book with its several un-Protestant and misleading statements. But that difficulty, too, was not such a great one after all. The Prayer Book, I argued, was the work of men's hands and therefore naturally and necessarily imperfect. Its modern form bore traces of its former character and of its origin. Its framework dated back to a missal of the Roman Church, with contributions from other Catholic and early Protestant documents. It illustrated the evolution of the doctrinal system of the Reformation Church, only gradually disentangling itself from

"Romish error." The book had passed through many changes, its phraseology and form of doctrinal expression had undergone repeated alteration and, no doubt, they would again; remaining blemishes in the form of misleading or equivocal expressions would some day be effaced from its pages. Such a view of the matter involved no moral difficulty, no question of conscience; an Article of the Church declared emphatically that—not the Prayer Book but—"Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation, and whatever is not read therein or may be proved thereby is not to be received of any man to be necessary to salvation."

By this process of reasoning I succeeded in marking out for myself a definite line of thought and course of action. It appeared to me to be the only possible one, considering the state of my mind and the character of my present surroundings. I had put away from myself for the time being greater and more abstract questions. I was an ordained clergyman; I had a work to do in the world, and my immediate business was to discover my present duty and to do it.

For a time the principle which I have thus briefly indicated and upon which I rigidly endeavoured to construct my future course in my new and difficult position seemed to work very well. The larger number of our people were evidently pleased that the doctrinal teach-

ing of our Church assumed a more decided form, and new life and interest were manifested on every side. We had large and attentive congregations, and many of those who had severed their connection with the Church and joined local Dissenting bodies, came back to us. The vicar gave unmistakable signs of real interest in the spiritual welfare of the people and, on several occasions, expressed ideas and feelings which, in the opinion of the congregation, had a decided Protestant ring about them and seemed to them to give promise of even better things to come. Still that fatal leaven which is at work in the Anglican Church, and which is most certainly undermining and destroying it, was incessantly making its presence felt, and was steadily undoing any good work which we were earnestly striving to accomplish.

There was a flourishing Sunday School connected with the parish, in which we naturally took much interest. Lessons were generally provided and full weekly instructions given to the teachers. But the latter had their own doctrinal views and leanings, and in that matter would never be guided or "dictated to" by any one, certainly not by the clergy. Some of the gentlemen who came to superintend the schools, and who were in the habit of giving short doctrinal instructions to the children after the ordinary lessons, were strongly Protestant and had no confidence in Church

teaching ; others were Anglican, and believed in the supreme importance and efficacy of the Sacraments. Each made a point of enforcing his own particular views when his turn came, and to warn against the errors of the other. Some were under a strong conviction that this was their special work and mission in the schools. As a consequence the children were taught one doctrine one Sunday, and quite a different doctrine another Sunday. One superintendent told them that the essentials of Christianity consisted in being baptized and made a member of the Church ; another that Church and Baptism mattered nothing at all, a conscious change of heart and submission to the Saviour being the sum and substance of real spiritual Christianity.

Each of these gentlemen had his own following amongst the teachers who, in their respective instructions, echoed the particular doctrines to which they felt most disposed to assent. But in their eagerness to witness for truth and to destroy deadly error they often extended their operations to other classes and children, with the result that there were incessant storms and misunderstandings and a sort of silent warfare carried on in the school. Some of the teachers had themselves never been baptized and confirmed, and expressed their indignation when the expediency of receiving these Sacraments was suggested to them.

It was, of course, difficult to estimate the effect of

such a system on the minds of the children. I invariably banished my scruples by cherishing a hope that the children would not be sufficiently interested to appreciate these doctrinal distinctions, and that, with the maturer knowledge of after years, they would have opportunities of thinking matters out for themselves. But it nevertheless caused me no end of pain and disappointment to reflect upon this fearful misuse of precious opportunities, and this deliberate tampering with the susceptibilities of awakening souls. I felt deeply convinced then, that it would be infinitely better to give no official religious instruction to children at all, than to impart it in a manner only calculated to confuse the young mind and to pervert and bias its judgment. Simple home instruction, such as a mother or sister might be able to impart, would at least leave the mind open and enable it, in after years, to approach doctrinal questions in a fair and reasonable spirit. As it was, the mind's earliest and most lasting impressions were made to depend upon its accidental religious associations, and upon some half-instructed Sunday-School teacher who could not possibly have had opportunities of weighing matters fully and fairly in his own mind. I have invariably found, in the course of my ministry in the Anglican Church, that Sunday-School teachers are for the most part very poorly equipped for their important and difficult work, and scarcely ever chosen by the clergy

because of their intellectual or moral qualifications. The services of any young man or young woman anxious "to do something" are readily enlisted, not because the applicants have something to teach and know how to teach it, but because there are always gaps to be filled up and the clergy require helpers. Can it be wondered at that, as a consequence, Sunday Schools are such an utter and entire failure in the Anglican Church, and that the clergy are constantly bemoaning their inability of retaining any kind of moral hold upon their scholars in after years? Can we be surprised at those grotesque conceptions of Religion and of God's dealings with men, which so often startle us in our intercourse with the poor and ignorant classes, and which somehow all find their home and shelter in that strange system which we dignify by the appellation "The National Church"?

But apart from these considerations, what a waste of energy and of golden opportunities! It is surely in early childhood that the heart is most disposed to receive lasting religious impressions, and that those certain religious truths should be imparted which are to safeguard the soul through the perils and quicksands of life, and give it a firm and permanent hold upon the "things that are not seen." We know from experience that no such early definite impression is ever wholly effaced in after years. And how great is the need of such clear and certain instruction in these present

days, when a thousand moral and physical dangers surround men and women at every step and in every sphere and position of life. How is the heart to resist temptation, the moral character to retain its balance, if there be no clear religious truth rooted and grounded in the soul, if all be vague and shadowy and undefined? Moral life cannot flow from religious doubt. A Christian character cannot be established upon an uncertain doctrine. Men and women of strong mind will never submit to the constraints of mere pious opinion. If there is a Divinely Revealed Truth in the world, and we are, in spite of the many difficulties and hostile influences of life, to obey it and to conform our wills to it, we must know in what that Truth consists, what God has really revealed. Religious views and opinions may satisfy Anglican clergymen of a certain order, and such persons as never think seriously about Religion; they are quite worthless amidst the storms and shipwrecks of human life.

But it was not very long before I had a further insight into the practical working of the Protestant doctrine of the right of private judgment in matters of Christian belief. There were many ardent spirits in our congregation who were not wholly satisfied with our position of sober intelligent Protestantism, and who had their doubts as to our doctrine. They considered that in a

locality like ours, with soul-destroying error surrounding us and emanating from within the bosom of the Church itself, it was expedient to take up a firmer and more aggressive attitude. Men of local standing and influence called upon me, and offered their personal help and their means towards an active local propaganda of Evangelical principles. They expressed it as their opinion, that in times of exceptional danger and trouble, it was the duty of the Protestant clergy to waive all questions of personal feeling and to go right forward into the enemy's camp, even though he might happen to be a brother and a colleague. They could not understand how any one could be content with half-measures. Other members of the congregation, mostly single elderly ladies, sought opportunities of expressing their views as to the soundness and scripturalness of my teaching. Some suspected me of liberal tendencies of thought; some thought that I had shown unmistakable signs of making a compromise with Ritualistic doctrine. One pointed out to me that I had failed to lay stress in my sermon on the principle of substitution in the doctrine of the Atonement; another thought that I did not dwell sufficiently in my teaching on the present action of the Holy Ghost and His immediate influences on the human heart. I incessantly received requests to attend private religious meetings to which local Dissenting ministers had also been invited, and suspicious looks

and expressions of distrust met me if, by reason of other engagements, I had found it impossible to come. It was a source of never-ceasing annoyance in the parish that the vicar despised Dissenters and studiously ignored their pastors and ministers.

These various malcontents seemed to be absolutely unconscious that their attitude was wholly untenable from the standpoint of the fundamental doctrine and practice of their Church. They gloried in their Evangelical liberty of thought and their inalienable right to exercise their judgment upon any matter of faith ; they were constantly and practically putting that liberty in operation. But they quite forgot that what they claimed for themselves was equally the right of those with whose doctrines they presumed to find fault, and that they were most certainly guilty of a gross presumption. What constituted them an authority in the Church ; what gave them the right to dictate to their duly appointed pastors? By what rule or standard could they claim to determine what was sound doctrine and what was not? They were most certainly entitled to their private opinion and belief ; but so was I. For surely I, like themselves, had a right to hold the views to which the exercise of my own particular judgment had directed me.

How strange that intelligent persons should be so slow in recognizing the utter untenableness of this extraordinary principle in the sphere of Revealed

Religion, and the intellectual and moral absurdities to which it leads when it is logically applied and put to the test. The present chaotic state of the Anglican Church surely affords constant and striking illustrations of this. The Anglican clergy and their people are incessantly and unavoidably exercising their individual minds on matters of faith, but they invariably quarrel if, in their respective conclusions, they happen to disagree. Circumstances and not infrequently the voice of the majority determine the issue of the conflict; but that issue itself is in the end only private opinion. Sometimes a bold clergyman succeeds in holding the fort against all comers and in imposing his private judgment on the larger number of his parishioners, but it is private opinion nevertheless, and can have no shadow of a claim to the very name of "authority."

But if this was so, how could any kind of authority be sought for in the Anglican Church? If Scripture could not be regarded as a final court of appeal in matters of doctrine, if the right of private judgment was the underlying principle of the Protestant Church, how could anything approaching authority or certainty be said to reside in any part or sphere of that Communion? There might be many claims, there might be the appearance of order and rule—State control would in itself guarantee such a thing in a Church by law established; but how could there be in it a Ruling Power, a

Living Voice finally and constantly pronouncing on disputed matters of faith and doctrine? The underlying principle of individual liberty would always, and of necessity, destroy such a claim and render it unacceptable to all really logical minds.

It will be seen that my mind had now arrived at a further and most important point. Practical experience and careful examination had already convinced me that Holy Scripture could not, on any reasonable principle, be regarded as a final authority in matters of faith. Such an authority had, however, unquestionably existed from the very earliest ages, and was sorely needed by the distressed and disorganized Christian Church in the present day. It could not be said to exist in the Anglican Communion, as the facts surrounding me incessantly and convincingly testified. It must therefore either have perished entirely, or reside in some other body or congregation.

The first conception was wholly untenable. Christ had emphatically declared that His words should never pass away. He had founded His Church upon a rock against which the gates of Hell should not prevail. There remained therefore only the second alternative. The Dissenting bodies called for no consideration; they had not even the semblance of historic continuity, and they did not claim it. They were Christian societies, representing some one aspect of Revealed Truth. They

were the refractory and self-willed children to which a distracted mother had given birth.

And then there was the Church of Rome. But that Church had corrupted herself, had overlaid the Divine teaching with the traditions and superstitions of men, and was the acknowledged and inveterate enemy of intellectual freedom and of moral and social advance.

Reasoning such as I have sketched out represents the attitude of my mind as it was at that time with respect to these deeply important questions. I had no definite knowledge of Catholic Truth, simply increasing doubts and misgivings respecting my own religious position, forced upon me by the actual experiences of my daily life. But as yet all was vague and chaotic, thought chasing thought in endless succession, the mind incessantly at work to discover some firm hold and secure resting place. I had a certain perception of the truths which I now believe and which, had I been brought up in the Catholic Faith, I should most certainly have considered as self-evident; but I looked at them then through coloured glasses, and with eyes holden by error and prejudice. I saw them in dim undefined outline and *isolated*, not standing in any kind of relation to other truths. My mind was still engaged in uprooting the foundations on which my erroneous belief had been built up. But I had made one decided step in advance. I had a clear conception of the disastrous consequences resulting

from the absence of authority in the Church, and I was convinced that liberty of judgment in matters of Revelation was a contradiction in terms and an absurdity.

At this time a book fell into my hands which proved a powerful aid in the development of my religious ideas, and which gave an entirely different direction to my thoughts. It was Döllinger's "First Age of the Church." Some friends were anxious to present me with a book and I named this one. I remembered having looked at it some years before, and having been struck by some remarkable passages to which my attention chanced to be directed. Somehow the author's name flashed into my mind. The work consisting of two volumes was presented to me, and I read it through at a single sitting. My interest never flagged for an instant, and when I laid it down I felt that it had given me the first intelligent and coherent conception of Christianity and the Church. The book most certainly made a very powerful impression upon my mind, and, in a sense, proved a turning-point in the history of my religious ideas.

It is, of course, conceivable that, under ordinary circumstances, the book would not have affected me in such a marked way. But coming to me as it did at a time when my mind was fast departing from the half-truths and misconceptions of Protestantism and casting about for something more tangible and solid to cling to, the

forcible and masterful argument of the great German scholar was like a revelation to my soul. It was like a stream of light pouring in upon me from the world of Truth and Brightness without, and, in a sense, making all things new. How clear and lucid were the statements of historic fact; how entirely free from artificial and strained interpretation, and from the conventional Protestant muddling! How self-evident and convincing were the simple inferences drawn from them! It was a lucid and masterly survey of the actual facts of history as an honest study presented them to an unbiassed mind: the simple teachings of Christ and the Apostles summarized from the Gospel records, the foundation and growth of the Church, the normal and necessary development of doctrine, the Sacraments and what they really were and meant, the Church in her later conflicts with human error and misconception—a graphic interesting sketch of what fact and history really disclosed respecting Christ and His Truth. Accuracy and trustworthiness seemed to me to be written on every page of this book, the clearness and forcibleness of the argument stimulating faith and rousing the full interest and energy of the mind.

There was one pre-eminently important principle, however, which this valuable book enabled me to grasp clearly, and which I cannot help feeling is of deep importance in any attempt to form a true conception of

the real character of the Christian Religion. It is almost entirely lost sight of by Protestant thinkers and writers, such omission leading to endless confusion and misconception. I cannot express it better than in Dr. Döllinger's own words :—"Christianity," he says, "forms a connected whole of teaching, commands, exhortation, and historical facts, each dependent on and explained by the other. Only a few can perceive this connection, and still fewer, or perhaps even none, can keep it ever clearly before their minds. Opponents direct their assaults only against isolated particulars taken out of their proper connection, and thus the attack may easily seem stronger and more plausible than the defence." It seems certain to me that if this important principle were more fully recognized and kept in view in the controversial treatment of Christian Truth, much misconception would be avoided, and many assaults against certain isolated truths of the Catholic Faith would lose their force.

But I am not now concerned with the defence of this valuable book, nor with the truths which it sets forth so clearly ; I am but recording the general impressions which it created in my mind, the intelligent conception which it gave me of historical and objective Christianity as an organic whole, as a system of mutually related and inter-dependent spiritual truths. For with the recognition of this principle and of its reasonableness an

entirely different and, what is more, a right direction was given to my method of research. Truths which had flitted through my mind in vague and shadowy outline began to assume a clear and well-defined shape, and took their place in an ordered system of Christian thought and doctrine. Difficulties which had long tortured my mind seemed for the first time to admit of very reasonable and satisfactory solution.

I well remember being immensely struck by Dr. Döllinger's very simple but masterly summary of the true historic doctrine of the Holy Eucharist. I had been taught all my life that the Romish doctrine of Transubstantiation was the wilful and superstitious perversion of a very simple and symbolical act, the after-thought of a debased Theology, and without any kind of support from the New Testament and the records of the belief and practice of the early Christian Church. I now had it on the word of one of the greatest of modern scholars and historians that the doctrine as the Roman Church teaches it to-day and as the Council of Trent has defined it, was most undoubtedly the doctrine of the early and undivided Church, and that it is founded both on a rational conception of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament and on a fair and reasonable interpretation of the repeated and deliberate statements of the New. I cannot say that I assented to this doctrine at once and

because of the statements made by this eminent scholar in his famous book. My mind was still far too full of Protestant notions and prejudices, and such a long continued mode of thought is not so easily broken through. I was still dominated by the idea of the superstitious and materialistic element in Rome's doctrines and of her perversion of the simple spiritual truths of the Gospel. I had still a purely subjective conception of the Christian Faith. But I was very strongly impressed with the force of the argument from history, and the immense weight of evidence in favour of the doctrine as defined by the Catholic Church. With such facts before the mind, the choice lay manifestly between two positions: either the Roman Church was correct in her teaching and definition, and bread and wine were by the act of valid consecration elevated to the supernatural sphere to become Divine Food for man; or the Church had, immediately after the pouring out of the Spirit, defiled herself and corrupted her teaching, and had, throughout the centuries, taught the world a lie. But was the latter idea admissible in view of the fact that she had never ceased to be the Mother of Saints and the unwavering witness to the central truths of the Christian Faith? I made a further study of the subject, and for the first time in my life consulted the doctrinal works of the ritualistic school of thought in my own communion.

I was still further disquieted by the irresistible fact

that the most learned and trustworthy amongst the High Church scholars had arrived at conclusions almost identical with those of Prof. Döllinger, and had certainly made no secret of the matter. They had in this direction undoubtedly ceased to be Protestant. But if the modern appeal to history and to the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament resulted in return to Catholic doctrine, what became of Protestantism and the Reformation; where and what was the Church of England? It was chiefly on this doctrine that the Reformation had turned; it was because of its denial that thousands had suffered loss and even death. I made a further careful study of Döllinger's earlier work on the *Doctrine of the Eucharist during the First Three Centuries*, and became convinced that, whatever the philosophic difficulties connected with the doctrine and the force of personal feeling and prejudice might be, history bore unmistakable testimony in its favour. Döllinger's final summary at the close of his very interesting work left not a fragment of doubt on the subject. It runs as follows:—

"We learn then from this inquiry, that the Catholic doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass is, in its essential characteristics, the doctrine of the earliest Church. The Holy Eucharist is a real and perfect sacrifice, presented in type by Melchisedec, prophesied by Malachi, instituted by Christ in memory of His Passion and as an

unbloody repetition of the bloody Sacrifice on the Cross; bread and wine are here transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ, offered as a thank and sin offering for the living and dead. This is the teaching of the Fathers of the first three centuries."

And now commenced the severe and long-continued struggle of my soul, the conflict of Truth with formed habits of thought and with the erroneous beliefs and ideas of many years It was a time never to be forgotten, and calling for renewed self-abasement and humiliation. How exceedingly wilful and perverse is the human heart, how obstinate and rebellious the will! But how irresistible is the action of the Spirit of Truth when He has really invaded the inmost sanctuary of the human soul! I was a Protestant with liberal tendencies certainly, but still a Protestant both by personal belief and profession. I was engaged in propagating what I believed to be the truth of the Protestant doctrine and the error of the Roman system of belief. And all this time a great change was sweeping over my inner life. The Spirit of Truth was teaching me the very doctrines which I was vainly trying to repudiate, and which had already taken root in my very inmost soul. Imperceptibly my entire conception of the Christian Faith was undergoing a radical transformation.

I have the most vivid recollection of making frantic efforts to resist the force of these convictions which

were forcing themselves upon me and to retain a hold upon the principles which were fast slipping from my grasp. I made a point of preaching sermons from Protestant texts. I adduced arguments from reason and Scripture in support of my doctrine. I enlisted the sharpest weapons of controversy to discredit the tenableness of the Roman position. But I was beating my head against a wall. While persuading others and earning their approbation, I entirely failed in persuading myself, and only increased the bitterness and distress of my soul. I well recollect that, on more than one occasion—when I had made the most careful study of my subject and had constructed the most persuasive and convincing arguments which went to impress the minds of the least like-minded in our congregation with a sense of the reasonableness of my teaching—an unaccountable sense of doubt took possession of my own mind, and I remained in the end unconvinced myself of the truth and tenableness of my doctrine. I could not efface the impression that there was another and wholly different aspect of the question, and that, from given premises, a wholly different argument could be constructed. I felt that I had not stated all that should in reason be advanced respecting the Catholic view of the doctrine under consideration. On several occasions my sermons were already in the printer's hands, when a sudden misgiving would seize me and I would take

them back to my rooms to modify some emphatic statement or to tone down some sharp expression.

It is not difficult for me now to account for this curious state of mind. It was the natural struggle of faith, the unavoidable travail of a soul preparatory to its emancipation and delivery. I was still stumbling about in the dim-lit cave of Protestant error ; but the "kindly light" was shedding brighter rays of truth upon my path.

It is a frequent source of wonder to many excellent people that converts to the Catholic Church are very commonly pronounced Protestants up to a very short time before their actual secession. They have found it difficult to account for such a peculiar moral phenomenon, and have not unjustly charged such converts with fickleness of mind and weakness of character. But there is really no difficulty in explaining it, and indeed it is not easy to see how it could be otherwise. The mind has received the negative and incoherent truths which the Protestant system has retained. It holds the fundamental belief in the Divine character of Jesus, in the historical truth of the Incarnation. But it looks upon them from the purely subjective standpoint in the light of Protestant interpretation and tradition. Some great intellectual difficulty unexpectedly presents itself, striking at the very root of this long cherished belief and position. The mind staggers, but begins to look about for means of defence. It exhausts its ingenuity

in the effort to regain its balance and to confirm and establish the truth of the doctrines under assault. The force of truth and of conclusive evidence finally gain the victory, and the entire Protestant theory breaks down: and the attitude of the mind towards Catholicism of necessity changes the moment the protest ceases. There remains no other alternative, unless it be that of unbelief: and the heart is never long in bearing its witness.

And these days of bitter soul anguish, when a very revolution was taking place in the inmost depths of my moral being, were certainly days of the most real and intense communion with God. If I was growing increasingly conscious that I did not possess the fulness of that spiritual Truth and Divine Faith upon which the healthy life of the spirit can alone be built up, I was never in my life more eager to persevere in my search, and to give myself no rest until I had found the pearl of great price. I had the deepest possible perception of the claims of Truth upon my soul and of the intense reality of the unseen world. And somehow I felt certain that God was leading and directing my mind and, in a way best suited to my temperament and constitution, gradually unravelling the net of error which was entangling my feet. If I could but make sure of being strong and of continuing loyal to the Spirit of Truth manifestly at work in my soul! Unhappily a thousand influences hostile to this subtle operation are ever in active

operation both in our inward and outward life: and these are only too fatally calculated to efface the force of Divine impressions and to bring the soul into bondage to formed habits of thought, and to that most dangerous of all tempters—public opinion. Even in the religious sphere, we are surrounded by that every-day world whose belief has no better foundation than the accidental circumstances of life, and which does not really trouble or care for the possession of Truth for its own sake. This commonplace religious world looks with a pitying smile at a soul travailing in pain and distress, and shrugs its shoulder at what it terms its self-created morbid difficulties and perplexities: and few of us can wholly escape the withering and blighting influence of these ordinary environments of life. We are again and again tempted to abandon our search, to be "sensible" and "rational" like other men, and to take "liberal" and "generous" views of things: and often the conflict is long and severe, calling into active operation and antagonism all the latent forces of our souls and sternly putting them to the test. It is no doubt at such times that we are most conscious of our inherent weakness and of that flaw in our nature, which it is so difficult to call by its right name. But it is also then that the loyal soul must realize its strength in God and its only hope in entire and whole-hearted surrender to Him. How intensely

real at such seasons is Prayer, the calmness of mind and heart secured by a free disclosure of every difficulty and perplexity; how deep is our conviction of the action of God in the world of our inner life and of the intense significance of the issue of the soul's present decision respecting the "things that are not seen." "It is true," says a great modern Christian historian, "that only too many amongst us are apt in the present times to let their boat drift about without rudder or compass upon the storm-tossed sea of public opinion, regardless as to whether it is cast ashore on some barren sand, or wrecked on some dangerous rock. They find it so much more convenient to be released from the duty of thought and reflection, and to allow themselves to be guided by the daily papers and their own immediate surroundings, and they imagine that they cannot, or dare not, swim against the stream. They think that the individual who cannot make up his mind to make public opinion his own, is bound in the end to be carried away by it. That this is not so, that on the contrary, very frequently a power not only of resistance but of victory over a widespread delusion is granted to individuals, is proved by many examples of both ancient and modern times."

Such a victory, I am confident, can only be secured by the most constant and intimate union with God, and by a whole-hearted determination, whatever the

consequence, to be loyal to self and to Truth. No half-hearted measure is likely to secure the victory ; no intellectual dilettantism will lead into the light of Truth. It must be sought after for its own sake, not because the effort stimulates the mind and occupies the interest, or perhaps secures some dialectical triumph. "And ye shall seek Me," saith the Lord, "and find Me, when ye search for Me with all your heart" (Jer. xxix. 13).

It must be borne in mind that the religious conflicts which I am thus recording within the space of a dozen pages, do not cover a period of days or weeks, but one of months and even years. I am endeavouring to recall, as clearly and fully as I can, the mental processes through which I passed at this period in my clerical career. But, of course, the change of ideas was only gradually effected, and at that time it would have been difficult for me, perhaps, to fully analyze the actual state of my mind. It was more a general crumbling together of old habits of thought and personal beliefs, than the definite acceptance of new ones. I saw new forms of truth to which my heart and mind alike assented before my soul's eye in dim and undefined outline ; but they had not as yet become part of myself. I was like an inexperienced builder anxious to construct a building and having many good and useful stones ready to hand, but lacking the knowledge of how to use my tools and how to fit the good stones on to the bad ones. I had

as yet no foundation or corner stone. I did not know how worthless the old stones really were, and my building naturally kept on tumbling to pieces. Some truths which I possessed were negative in their character, others were matter of intellectual assent more than of inward moral apprehension. I was still only handling fragments of that Divine Manuscript of inestimable value which the perverse folly and self-will of man have torn to pieces.

But in the outward history of my clerical life event followed event in rapid succession. The firmer Protestant attitude of our church began after a time to assume a somewhat aggressive form. Some restless spirits in the congregation commenced a systematic local contribution of Protestant literature of a polemical character. This distribution was not always limited to the confines of our own particular parish, but a tract here and there would find its way into the High Church districts and disturb the equilibrium of some ritualistic churchman. Occasionally some well-known Protestant lecturer was invited to address meetings at a local hall and to denounce the moral evil lurking in the sacerdotal pretensions of the modern ritualistic sect. At these lectures our church was invariably most largely represented. Dissent united with the Evangelical church to attack the strongholds of the ritualistic camp and to change the tone of local public opinion. The news-

papers responded to the call and joined in the conflict. Local magnates who had never been known to manifest strong religious feelings and who were seldom themselves seen at church, became ardent in their defence of "sound doctrine" and of the Protestant liberty of the Anglican Church. The sound of war was in the air, and controversial strife chilled the heart and confused the judgment. The High Church clergy made a brave defence and, in no measured terms, denounced this propaganda of Protestant ideas, quite oblivious of the fact that in all honesty they themselves stood committed to these doctrines, and were most certainly laying themselves open to severe and justifiable attack. All doctrinal teaching in the parish became controversial, and the most easy-going of men were forced to take up decided positions. My vicar spoke with regret of the teaching and doings of his friend and clerical brother; the clerical brother denounced him as a Dissenter and as standing wholly outside the pale of the Anglo-Catholic Church. The facts of history were twisted to suit the aims and purposes of either side, and truth and reason and Christian good feeling sought in vain to make their voices heard.

What a sight for a man whose mind was already full of doubts and misgivings! What a further and fearful illustration of the hopelessness of the position of the Anglican Church! I too took my place in this battle

of religious opinions; the force of circumstances compelled me to take sides and to identify myself with the work and aims of my church, but I had no heart or interest in the matter and cared little as to what the final issue might be. I saw inconsistency and self-contradiction on one side as well as on the other, and a hopeless confusion overshadowing the whole. There could here be no question of secondary and unessential points of Faith and Doctrine. The very severity of the conflict was due to the fact that it concerned necessary and important truths respecting the soul's life and the means and the methods of its access to God. The Dissenters and Evangelicals denied the entire sacramental system of religious life and declared it to be a popish corruption of "pure doctrine"; the Ritualists appealed to the Prayer Book and to the facts of history in confirmation of Catholic Truth. One party defended the work of the Reformation as God's greatest blessing to man and declared their determination to resist every attempt to undo it; the other condemned the Reformation as the source of all evil and of the present lamentable and distressed state of the Church. One party gloried in their separation from the corrupt system of mediæval Popery; the other lamented it as having too much the appearance of a wilful and determinate "break." The larger number of the combatants saw nothing anomalous and self-destructive

in this unworthy wrangle. They had known controversy all their life and had probably never looked upon Truth except in a negative way. It was the normal expression of their belief in Christ and of their zeal for the vindication of what they believed to be His doctrine. But there were many who held entirely aloof from the squabble and who looked upon the whole wretched business with contemptuous disdain. What possible claim, they said, could such a church hope to have and to retain on their hearts and intellects? It was surely a picture to sadden the most hopeful heart and to fill the most loyal and enthusiastic with despair. Not only sects and parties divided by conflicting creeds and opinions, but the National Church herself torn asunder by mutually hostile factions and quite incapable of declaring her mind and of giving a clear and certain sound. And what could be expected of the people when their teachers did not agree, but were themselves destroying any rational claims of the Religion which they were commissioned to teach? Here were the consecrated ministers of the National Church over whom the same solemn words had been spoken at their ordination, who had pledged themselves to strive for the same great end, and who had unhesitatingly declared their belief in the truth and purity of their Church's doctrines, in violent conflict with each other, presenting to the world the

terrible picture of a disorganized Christendom. And the unbeliever looked on with scorn and unmitigated contempt. But with what right could they maintain the very shadow of a claim to authority? Private judgment clearly lay at the root of the whole matter and pervaded all parties alike.

And so my negative conception of Truth began to assume a positive character. I accepted the doctrine of the Visible Church, not only because Scripture and History bore unmistakable witness to it, but because reason and common sense postulated it and practical experience was continually demonstrating its necessity. How could a Divine Truth, acceptance or rejection of which involved eternal consequences, be preserved to mankind and handed down from age to age in uncorrupted purity unless there was a Visible Teaching Body, directed and informed by the Spirit of Truth and constantly guarding and administering the Sacred Deposit? What chance could it have of escaping the disintegrating influences which were certain to be exercised upon it by the unrestrained activity of the human mind? The picture before me supplied the answer to this question in the fullest and most startling manner. The Church of which I was a minister had freed itself from any such supposed irksome restraint by granting full liberty to the individual judgment. It had made it possible for learned and unlearned alike to

say what they would and could and what they would and could not believe; it had broken away from the Body which constituted the Guardian Keeper of the Divine Deposit and had placed the latter under the care of the individual conscience, practically putting its judgment in the place of that of Almighty God. It had vainly hoped that in doing this, purity and integrity of doctrine would be infallibly secured. But it had miscalculated the inherent strength of the human mind and had made no allowance for the fickleness and changeableness of the human heart. And the supposed liberty resulted in license. The human mind was not long in discrediting a Divine Truth which it could not fully discern and in casting off the restraints of a law under which it fretted and chafed and which was hostile to its normal tendencies. It constituted itself the final judge, and declared what measure of Truth it was prepared to receive. And the Divine Truth dissolved itself away amidst endless dispute and contention, leaving mere fragments by which to trace its former sphere and location. The mind itself, in its pseudo-liberty, relapsed into that bondage from which the Divine Truth had come to set it free!

Reason and experience alike, therefore, supported the indubitable historic and traditional fact and the Scriptural witness upon which the doctrine rests, and I assented in mind to the Catholic Doctrine of the Visible

Church. And this mental attitude found further support in the actual history of the Roman Catholic Church herself, even when regarded from the traditional Protestant standpoint and as the corrupter of Protestant Doctrine. It was an incontrovertible fact, admitting of no manner of doubt, that however much the Roman Church had added to the primitive doctrine, she had most certainly preserved the doctrine itself and had never parted with one fragment or tittle of it. It was her boast in the present day and her chief cause of offence in Protestant eyes, that she was "semper eadem"—unchangeable. Even Protestant scholars bore witness to this fact and showed how, from her earliest history, she had ever been the type and pattern of a Church and renowned, throughout the Christian world, for her orthodoxy and sound doctrine. I was astonished to find a statement like the following amongst the writings of a Protestant scholar, who could not possibly be suspected of secret leanings to Catholicism: "The Roman Church was trusted," says Professor Bright in a lecture on *The Roman Claims*, "for its traditional immunity from heretical speculation. It was a typical Church, a sample Church, a miniature of the whole Body, and by referring to it one could see what was held by all."

And further, what a strange fulfilment of our Lord's words to S. Peter in their most literal interpretation!

He was, it will be remembered, the first amongst the Apostles to make a clear and emphatic confession of belief in our Lord's Divinity; he was, in that sense, the first orthodox Christian, and even if those words of Christ, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock," &c., had reference only to S. Peter's spiritual insight and avowed belief, how strange that the Church which claimed him for a founder should have been the pattern of sound doctrine, and the type and standard of the orthodox belief; should never in the whole course of its career have wavered in its confession of this fundamental article of the Faith!

It is a source of constant wonder to me that these remarkable circumstances and tendencies of thought did not produce a more decisive effect on my mind and that I was so slow in emancipating myself from the early bias still so powerfully dominating my mind. These striking facts, presenting themselves as they do in the light of modern events and the disruptions outside the Church, should in themselves be sufficient to demonstrate the claims of the Roman Church and to warrant whole-hearted submission. Even if all be true that is alleged against her, she is most certainly the only Communion which has preserved the Apostolic faith respecting the Person of Christ and of which it can never be said, as of the numerous sects outside her pale, that she has "divided Christ." It is

surely outside the Catholic sphere that the spirit of Anti-Christ should be looked for!

And of course, this doctrine of the Visible Church, founded by our Lord Himself to be His representative on earth and the Teacher of the successive generations of men, confirmed that other Truth respecting the present mode of our Lord's action on human souls which was already fixed in my mind. One had the most important and necessary bearing on the other. Christ imparted His life to men sacramentally through the mediumship of His Visible Church, this Body thereby becoming exclusively the ark of salvation and the Kingdom of God. It followed, as a consequence, that no Body outside her communion and of merely human origin could substantiate a similar claim. The Church thus became the only means of salvation in the sense that she was the dispenser of the only valid Sacraments conveying the "Christ-life." And no mere human weakness and frailty, nor even wilful sin, could affect this validity; it was a question of institutions and ordinances with which human personality had nothing to do. In fact, it was a conception of Christianity differing in principles from that in which I had been brought up. And to this conception my mind was being slowly led by the force of circumstances surrounding my life and by the light of Truth shining with ever-increasing power into my mind.

And with these deductions and reflections the first vague feeling of uneasiness passed over my soul. If my method of argument was correct, if the Roman Church alone had the gift of the Spirit and the valid Sacraments, then it followed that, quite apart from doctrinal views and considerations, I was outside the sphere of the true Christ-life and separated from the family of God. And this thought naturally caused me the keenest possible distress and anxiety and awakened the most searching questions in my mind. Still, I saw very clearly that so far the responsibility of this circumstance could scarcely be said to rest upon me personally. I had never exercised my choice in the matter; I had never knowingly and consciously rejected the Truth, or by an act of my will excluded myself from the Divine covenant. My position was due to the force of circumstances, and if I was in error and outside the pale of Christ's Church it was certainly through no fault of my own. My responsibility could only be said to be beginning now: from the moment that serious doubts had come into my mind and that I seemed to discern the outlines of a Truth of the deepest possible importance to the world's moral and spiritual life and to the welfare of my own individual soul. But was it really so? Or was I, after all, in error? Was the present Roman Church the true Body of Christ and that Divine Visible Society in which the Spirit of God and of Christ dwells and in which alone the

gifts of Christ to His people are validly administered? Even though history and experience might be declared to witness in her favour, had she not by her doctrinal corruptions forfeited this claim? She had persecuted some of the holiest of God's saints, had substituted mere human traditions for the pure doctrines of the Gospel, had opposed the progress of intellectual freedom and of scientific thought; had, moreover, formulated doctrines and principles which could not possibly be said to receive support and confirmation from the statements of the New Testament. How few points of resemblance were there, for instance, between the Primitive Church of the Apostolic days as we trace it in the records of the Acts of the Apostles, and of early history and the Roman Catholic Communion as we know it in this present time! How was this difficulty to be explained? On what logical principle could the striking transformation be accounted for and defended? My mind was struggling with this difficult and perplexing problem but, as I need scarcely add, without attaining any practical and tangible result. How was this possible so long as the Protestant misconception respecting the character of Divine Revelation was dominating my mind and I did not possess the key without which the problem could never be effectually solved? I was still looking at Truth from the purely Protestant standpoint and labouring under that fatal delusion, that all that

God has revealed to man is explicitly contained within the two covers of a book.

At this time I began a systematic study of Cardinal Newman's works. I knew, of course, that he had been through it all and that he had found reasonable ground for accepting the Catholic Church. I had occasionally read certain portions of his works and had constantly used his Anglican sermons as helps in my own preparation for the pulpit. But I had never sought to ascertain what the grounds actually were on which he had separated from the Anglican Communion. I had often speculated on that remarkable phenomenon and its probable causes; but I had formed no definite ideas. I thought it very possible that a purely intellectual method of doctrinal and historic research had imparted some kind of bias to his mind and had prejudiced its conclusions, and that a certain state of mental and spiritual confusion had finally driven him to seek rest and peace in Rome's rigid doctrinal system. Like the majority of my clerical friends, I had got myself to look upon his act of submission as a kind of intellectual suicide, gladly committed to secure rest and peace for the heart. But like them and like, alas! the majority of men, I had never studied the actual facts of the case, or sought to verify the opinions to which I had given expression. I had passed judgment upon a great mind and upon the most ardent and disinterested of truth-

seekers upon no better evidence than personal opinion and the commonly accepted views of the multitude.

But now I approached his works in an entirely different frame of mind. I was myself distressed and perplexed and came to seek for guidance and help. I was anxious to ascertain what reasonable solution could be offered to the harassing problems disturbing and disquieting my soul, and by what process of thought so great a thinker had arrived at his conclusions. My mind was open and now fully alive to the fact, that it had formed its views upon mere generalization and imperfect knowledge. I read the *Apologia pro Vitâ Suâ*, which gives a deeply interesting survey of the history and transformation of the late Cardinal's religious views and conceptions. And who could fail to discern in that striking book the working of a marvellous intellect directed by immense stores of knowledge and, above all, by a burning desire for Truth? I saw how his mind had passed from point to point in its progress, verifying with almost painful scrutiny and exactness every onward step which the force of Truth had impelled it to take; how here too, Fact and Truth had had a long and hard struggle with the normal and inherited tendencies of the mind. The logic of the argument, supported as it was throughout by the results of scholarly research and by a most conscientious and painstaking historical investigation, appeared to me to be irresistible. It was undeniable that my mind

had, in its own small sphere and by a wholly different and independent method of research, arrived at similar conclusions. Indeed was any other conclusion possible to a mind really open to the force of Truth? Or was I also twisting my intellect and constructing my argument upon an impossible and untenable principle? But in that case how was it, that the ardent and disinterested truth-seekers were incessantly twisting their minds, while the indifferent and easy-going Christians had the calm and full assurance of its possession?

The study of the *Apologia* sent me to the Essay on the "Development of Doctrine," a book which I read again and again; and it was, I am sure, with a full apprehension of the principle which underlies it, that the fog began definitely to clear away from my mind. This principle became the key by which I was enabled to unlock door after door. It enabled me to account naturally and rationally for the so-called changes and corruptions in the doctrinal system of the Roman Church and it explained in an intelligible way her present claim and position.

From the moment I gained a really clear conception of this principle of the Development of Doctrine to this present day, I have never been able to see on what grounds any normal mind can reject it or how it can for a single moment be called in question. It seems to me to demonstrate a self-evident truth and one which can-

not be in any sense a matter of opinion. It is practically recognized, up to a certain point at least, by the Protestant Church and by every sect which makes use of, say: the Nicene Creed. The elementary principles only of that Creed are contained in the Sacred Scriptures; the complete Creed itself is most certainly the result of "the Development of Doctrine." The early Confession of Faith as in use in Apostolic times, is contained in our Lord's final instructions to His Church: "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." "I believe that Jesus is the Christ," "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," are the simple formulas with which we meet in the records of the Primitive Church. They were ample and sufficient in that early age, while the Truth was still held without corruption and no serious attempt had been made to pervert it or deny it. But the mind of the world soon came into collision with the mind of the Church. The new doctrine was attacked and called in question; the natural intellect exercised its ingenuity in order to obscure and corrupt the truth it contained and to discredit it in the eyes of man. There was a constant and very natural tendency to tone it down and, by accommodating it to the religious fads and philosophies of the hour, to efface from it its divine characteristics. And, as a natural consequence, the Creed grew and expanded. The truths it conveyed were explained and

amplified to guard on the one hand against error and misconception, and to serve on the other for a better and more concise setting forth of the chief truths of the Christian Religion. Additional light was thrown upon it from Holy Scripture and from the Christian conscience guided and directed by the Spirit of Truth. It was not until the year 325 that the Council of the Church fixed the better portion of the Creed. It assumed its present form only at the Council of Constantinople held in 381. It could easily be maintained, that the Creed is neither contained in the Scriptures, nor found in the documents of the Church until the middle of the fourth century. It is, *in a sense*, and in its present form, most certainly an addition and an innovation. But there is not a clause in this "developed" formula of which the underlying element is not, in point of fact, contained in Holy Scripture and which does not find the fullest confirmation in the belief of the early Church, as history and tradition have preserved it. A development has most assuredly taken place, but that development is manifestly a conservative process and one which can only tend to elucidate and set forth the fulness of the Truth which the earlier formula contains merely in germ. The latter is the seed, while the former is the flower in full bloom. It does not add new truths to the old ones but expands them, shows their mutual relation and throws the light of better knowledge, of fuller research and of a quickened spiritual

perception upon them. It is the normal result of the Spirit's guiding action upon the Church.

And where could such a reasonable development be said to terminate? The principle once admitted, why should the fourth century and the Council of Nicæa be taken to be its measure and limit? If the Church has once defined what is to be believed as most agreeable to the mind of Scripture and Christian tradition, why not again? Why should it not in the nineteenth century still further define the Faith in the face of error and misconception? Was not the promise given, that the Spirit should guide into all truth? Was any time specified when any such action was to cease? Is not all truth expansive? Are we not daily learning more and more respecting the will and purposes of God both in nature and in grace? Have we a right to say that in the Church's perception of the truths of the Faith there is to be arrest and stagnation?

On this principle it is not inconceivable, that a disciple of the Apostles might be staggered when listening for the first time to a recital of the Nicene Creed in its present form. It might sound strange to him on the ground of an unfamiliar phraseology. He might for a moment look upon it with suspicion. But thought and reflection and a glance at *the intervening course of events* would remove the difficulty from his mind, and make him recognize the true metal underlying the new

phrase: the truths of God expanded and defined and explained, and thus safeguarded against human perversion and corruption.

And it will be seen how many difficulties vanish when the principle is applied to the doctrinal position of the Roman Catholic Church. The Church starts with the conception that she is the Divine Society in which the Spirit of Truth is in normal operation guiding, directing, expounding, leading into all Truth, making clearer and clearer what was only partially discerned, setting forth truths of special importance in a particular age. And admitting this claim, as all loyal Catholics do, it must surely be clear, that a doctrine contained in Holy Scripture and commonly accepted and believed in the early Christian age, but only dogmatically declared as an Article of Faith in the nineteenth century and in the face of certain prevalent errors and misconceptions, is as binding upon the Christian conscience as the Nicene Formula was in its own day, and is most certainly a *definition* of the Faith, not an addition to it. It is the same Church which is defining and elucidating; it is from the same source that she is drawing her information; it is the same Spirit of Truth which is guiding and directing her. If this principle be denied, the only other logical alternative would be the denial of the existence of a Teaching Body, of the action of the Divine Spirit in it, and the entire abolition and rejec-

tion of any kind of Creed or formulated Confession of Doctrine—to ignore, in fact, the Day of Pentecost and the divine events which are subsequent to it.

It was Cardinal Newman then who provided me with the golden key which unlocks so many apparent doctrinal mysteries, and the loss of which lies at the root of all Protestant errors and misconceptions. But my conviction was still a purely intellectual one. I saw the Truth clearly and in its fulness, and continued reflection pointed to no satisfactory escape from it; but my moral nature did not at once assimilate it. It seemed almost too good to be true, and to solve difficulties which somehow a Protestant comes to regard as the normal constituent of his religious life. My heart hesitated to embrace it and to make it its own. A still further discipline lay before it, and many difficulties had yet to be removed. But I was now fully on the path of inquiry, and what is of still greater importance, I was (as I now see) on the right path. I had got hold of truths and principles which, in their logical inference, could lead to but one conclusion.

I am now fully convinced, on the grounds of wider experience, that however much we may in our inquiry after Truth endeavour to free ourselves from early bias and the influences of surrounding conditions, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to entirely efface

them from the mind. They act upon us at every step and at every point and, unknown to ourselves, sway and determine the judgment. We may be ever so determined to be loyal to ascertained truth and to face temporal loss and suffering in adhering to it and in defending it, but the thought of the ultimate consequences is never wholly absent from the mind. And that vague fear of consequences hinders its free action and delays its final decision. There is an ever present sense, that if the mind be allowed to work out its logical conclusions and these be in favour of Rome, loss of position, of prestige, of many friends, the ridicule of the "rationally minded" and the intellectual are bound to be the inevitable consequences, and this half-realized consciousness paralyzes the normal action of the soul, and diverts its energies into different channels. It is thus that many persons go through life half persuaded, holding some Catholic truths, but denying others and rebelling against them, dissatisfied with their own communion and not satisfied with any other. They are scarcely themselves aware how apt the mind is in that condition to seize upon a supposed difficulty and thus defend to itself the delayed surrender. We are all familiar with the phrase, "I believe this or that Catholic doctrine; but I cannot get over the doctrine of Indulgences or of the Immaculate Conception." Does it ever occur to such persons, that a Church which

holds so much of Truth is not likely to have gone astray on these few points, and that there is a greater probability of its being right than the individual judgment, which has already and admittedly been seriously misled in matters of Faith?

But the light of Truth was now increasingly breaking upon my soul, and there were moments when some train of reflection led to unspeakable distress and inward anxiety which were accentuated by the fact, that there was denied me the power of utterance or of communication of thought. I knew that if I spoke of my perplexity to any clerical friend, "dangerous tendencies" would be suspected, and in any case my mind would be pronounced as being in a morbid state. So I shut up my thoughts in my own heart and, in spiritual matters, became isolated from my surroundings. But I poured out my soul to God and prayed that my intellect might be instructed and enlightened; that He might either confirm the impressions formed in my mind and give me courage to obey them, or efface them from it like the phantoms of a diseased imagination. And if partially discerned truths did not then immediately become clear to me and doubts were not removed, the answer always came in increased spiritual strength for the conflict, in a determination to persevere, and in the consciousness that His guiding hand was behind the "kindly light" which was shedding ever widening rays of Truth upon

my soul's path. How often in those troubled days rose those words of burning prayer to my lips:

"Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom
Lead Thou me on,
The night is dark and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet: I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me."

It was in my case, in the truest sense, one step at a time. Gradually and painfully I climbed the steep ascent, often slipping back again in my eagerness, and frequently not without bruising and hurting my hands and my feet; but again and again pressing on, upheld by a Hand stronger than my own, until I reached the mountain-top and was permitted to gaze on the promised land and to behold the fairness and beauty and harmonious colouring of the surrounding scene. How hard and bitter was the struggle, but how great, how infinitely sweet was the reward!

I will now briefly summarize the results of the mental processes through which I had passed up to this point, and from which it will be seen how far I had really got.

1. The very conception of a Revelation implied clearness and definiteness. A Revelation, leaving the mind in doubt or uncertainty as to the truths on which it had come to throw light, was no Revelation at all.

2. This self-evident truth postulated authority in matters of faith and doctrine, an authority having Divine sanction and institution, and being consequently binding upon the human mind and conscience.

3. The Protestant sects did not claim to possess it. They, in fact, repudiated any such claim, basing their doctrinal systems upon purely subjective conceptions. Their doctrine of the authority of Holy Scripture could not reasonably be maintained, since appeal to it yielded different and sometimes mutually destructive results, and tended to the obscuring of all Divine Truth. The Scriptures themselves, in their fair and reasonable interpretation, made or supported no such claim. The doctrine of private judgment was wholly untenable ; it tended to destruction and loss of Truth.

4. The Anglican Communion made the claim to authority, but could not substantiate it. Experience proved that it did not possess it. It spoke in vague terms of "the Church," but could not define what it meant by that term. The word had a different meaning in the minds of different men. That Communion, moreover, stood committed to an article which referred back to Holy Scripture as a final authority, and its pronouncement could consequently only be private opinion. Authority could not, in fact, be sought for in any part or sphere of that Communion.

5. Such an authority had nevertheless existed from

the earliest time. It was by it that the Canon of Scripture had been formed. The world stood in urgent need of it in the present day. The disastrous effects of the Reformation witnessed to the evils of its absence.

6. Christ had unquestionably founded a Visible Church. Its pronouncements constituted for centuries the final court of appeal. It was the home of the Spirit, and the channel of communication of the Christ-life to the world. It was the expression of the changed form of His activity.

7. Could the apparently reasonable claim of the Roman Church be substantiated? Did she in her present condition illustrate the principle of Development or Corruption? If the latter, did she thereby forfeit her historic claim? Two things were true of her:

a. She had never denied the orthodox faith.

b. The testimony of History confirmed the truth of her doctrine of the Holy Eucharist.

But to these intellectual conclusions must be added one other point, namely: the impression created upon my mind by my experience of the practical working of the Protestant system. To the careful student of the great controversy the immense superiority of the entire system of Catholic belief is almost certain to become apparent in the course of time. He can scarcely withhold intellectual assent and conviction in the face of so much historic fact and doctrinal consistency. But the

moral value of Catholic doctrine is best brought home to him by practical experience, and by witnessing the worthlessness of the Protestant belief in the presence of the deeper longings and questions of the human heart. It is, after all, in trouble and sorrow, in real soul agony and in the closing days of life that we realize the spiritual impotence of a purely negative and abstract religion and its utter inability to meet the deeper wants of the human spirit. One would suppose that a Religion in which the Incarnation of the Son of God, who lived and acted as man amongst men, is the most central fact, would be admitted to be the most objective Religion that the mind of man could hope to conceive. And one would suppose that a Religion so objective and in a sense so material, if I may in this connection use that term, would continue to have objective and visible characteristics guarding against the mind's normal tendency to lapse into mere abstract imagining. But, by an extraordinary perversion of principle, Protestantism has set up a false conception of spirituality and has proclaimed that to be unspiritual which is also visible and tangible to the outward senses and comes through definite human channels and institutions. It has invented a doctrine which is supposed to demonstrate a truth higher than that contained in the doctrine of the Incarnation: and it has thus thrown the human mind back into the in-

tellectual bondage from which the Incarnation of Christ was to set it free, and has replaced the objective doctrine by mere abstract and subjective opinion. It has substituted "ideas" and "feelings" for the living Christ sacramentally present in His Church. It bids the distressed mind believe and "lay hold on Christ," to get peace and comfort out of its abstract conceptions; but it has provided no rule by which the mind can make certain when it has "got hold" and when it has not, and how far it is to trust passing feelings and impressions.

With these influences and ever deepening convictions operating upon my mind, it will be readily understood that my position gradually became untenable, and that I was finally compelled to resign my Curacy.

IV.

DRIFTING.

IT will be seen that my religious perplexity was now beginning to assume a very serious character and to affect me in a very definite and practical way. What was to be my future course? What was I to teach in any sphere of work to which I might hereafter be appointed? I knew, of course, that there were many parishes in England which were free from religious strife and which had remained comparatively unaffected by the greater controversies agitating the Church. But this fact did not solve my intellectual difficulty. A subtle poison working in the human system does not cease to exist because external circumstances and the forces acting upon it have failed to call it into active operation. On the contrary, it is sure to continue its silent but fatal work and, in the course of time, to undermine and destroy the entire constitution. And I was morally convinced that there was some serious flaw

in the very foundations upon which the fair Anglican edifice was built up and that, so far as I was concerned, this flaw would again and again make itself felt. It was no longer possible for me to ignore it. It was certain, moreover, that whatever sphere of work I might finally determine upon, it was necessary that I should have clear views and belong to some definite school of thought in the Church. Like many other clergymen of the present day, I might decline to label myself, and assume a sort of liberal and superior air ; but this would not help me to evade the difficulty. The people themselves, to whom I should be called to minister, would label me as soon as I opened my mouth ; and I could not even make my requirements known to my clerical brethren without stating my doctrinal position and identifying myself with some distinctive party or principle. The weekly advertisements in the Church papers illustrated this in a most graphic and striking way. But at this present time I had no views and belonged to no school of thought. I doubted the most fundamental doctrine of one party and had no confidence in those of the other. I was in a state of mental transition, "distrustful of my own communion, and unassured by any other." And consequently my difficulty was bound to present itself the moment I attempted to teach doctrinal Christianity or to explain the principles of the Church of England. An Evangelical clergyman

would stand aghast at my ideas respecting Holy Scripture and Sacramental Religion and the necessity of a final binding authority in the Church. A High Churchman would scorn to accept my services so long as I doubted the validity of Anglican Orders or the Catholicity and historic continuity of the National Church; so long as I remained convinced that the Anglican Church was national and royal in its origin and character. I made one or two inquiries with a view to temporary work; but my applications were in each case declined on the grounds that my statements respecting my doctrine were too vague and unsatisfactory.

And the very thought of finding myself again in a responsible position, in which I could not honestly say and teach what I felt and believed and in which I should live under the constant temptation of tampering with my conscience, awakened the most rebellious feelings in my soul. After all, the question of my profession and of my future work was of a secondary character. It was a matter of the most momentous personal interest and importance and a duty which I owed to myself and to the Spirit of Truth at work in my heart, to ascertain beyond the shadow of a doubt what God had really revealed and where His Truth in its fulness and purity, and consequently authoritative form, was to be found. My entire spiritual life was disordered and disorganized. Every thought of religion,

every prayer, every act of sacramental communion suggested a question of doctrine and brought the difficulty vividly to my mind, and a sense of unrest and disquietude pervaded my whole moral being.

I therefore determined not to discharge any clerical duty until I had cleared my mind and knew myself what I really believed and what I was consequently in a position to teach. My Protestant friends declared that I was morbid, and craving a certainty which was neither promised nor attainable in this present life; while my Anglican friends considered that although on the right tack, I had as yet no true and accurate conception of the actual position and of the glorious privileges and advantages of my own Church. I, on the other hand, continued very firmly convinced that I was not morbid and that there was a very serious flaw in the entire chain of Anglican reasoning. Still I had to acknowledge that my knowledge was immature and one-sided. My views were based upon generalization rather than upon accurate information, and it was not impossible, that further thought and research and a careful examination of the Anglican position might disperse the shadows from my mind and reveal to me some honourable means of escape out of the difficulty. Such a course, moreover, had now not only become a duty but an imperative necessity, since I could not attempt any clerical work until I had formed definite and final

convictions and could feel that I really had a doctrine which I could teach. I consequently made arrangements to attend a course of lectures at the University of ——, and to enter upon a period of careful and systematic study, meanwhile putting away my books for a brief holiday and rest.

When I had settled down at ——, I sought the guidance of a learned and well-known clergyman of "high views," to whom I explained my aims and desires, and who very kindly marked out for me a course of study which he considered most likely to aid me in throwing light upon the historical and doctrinal problems which were perplexing my mind. He further promised to give any personal help which it might be in his power to afford, and which might in any way assist me in forming my views and in dispersing my doubts. I found that the list which he had given me was a very comprehensive one, and that it practically covered the whole ground. Two subjects, of course, called for special study and attention: History and Doctrine. These two were of supreme importance and, in a sense, included the others. Christianity was an historical fact. Its chief truths were based upon actual events in history, and its subsequent development and its doctrinal expressions ought consequently to be capable of verification. It must be possible to ascertain by an historical method of research what the early undivided Church had

really taught, how her greatest teachers had interpreted Holy Scripture, what conceptions they had formed of the Church and authority, and how the Anglo-Catholic position presented itself in the light of such history.

I became more and more convinced that in a Religion which was so distinctly historical there ought to be no room for so much conjecture and difference of opinion, since it was manifestly possible either to verify ideas and principles, or to demonstrate conclusively their falseness and untenableness. There was the fact, moreover, that the more learned amongst the leaders of thought in the Anglican Church based their teaching upon the appeal to history, and endeavoured by this method to re-establish the pure and uncorrupted doctrine which had been held and believed in from the very earliest times.

I need not add that I entered upon this course of study with a deep sense of the importance of my task. I naturally had a very keen interest in a matter so directly affecting my own spiritual life and of such deep significance to my future work and career. I was very anxious to be useful again soon in a practical way, and I was ready to welcome any fact or truth that might go to solve my difficulties and thus enable me to return to my duties. But, of course, I felt that it must now be nothing less than Truth and Fact. I was tired to death of "views." I was more certain than ever that in a

matter of such supreme importance I should never be able to rest content with mere opinions, and that I should always find it impossible to construct upon these either my own religious life or my method of teaching in the ministry of the Church. Opinions and the consequences resulting from them, had caused my present confused and unsettled state of mind. I now wanted Fact and Truth, or nothing at all. Christianity was either a Revelation, disclosing definite truths to which the mind could not unaided attain, or it taught nothing at all; it could have no claim upon my interest and allegiance. And this burning desire to discover Truth never ceased to be accompanied by the most earnest and heart-searching prayer. I was never for a moment unconscious all this time that the highest spiritual Truth cannot be reached by the intellect alone, and that "no man can call Jesus the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." I knew that intellectual subtleties were very apt to obscure and darken the vision of the soul. But it was equally clear to me that God invariably works by ordinary human means and it was manifestly my duty to clear away the obstacles which might be hindering His access to my soul: to search earnestly and with concentration of all the powers of my complex being. It was my misfortune, not my fault, that I had been born into a confused state of religious thought, and since He had called me by His grace it was my duty to respond

to His call, and to seek Truth up to the point of my personal ability and power of discernment. I therefore not only worked and thought and read, but I prayed earnestly and frequently, beseeching the Father of Light to grant me an humble and contrite heart and to give me both the burning desire to discover Truth and strength to embrace it, when discovered, with all my heart and soul. It was a source of constant distress to me, that so few people appeared to be troubled by the difficulties which seemed so obvious and palpable to me; and not infrequently the thought stole across my mind, that I might after all have become somewhat morbid and thus perhaps exaggerated my scruples. I made a point, therefore, of every day praying God to free my mind from any phantom that might have taken possession of it and to enable me to see things in their proper relation and proportion. And I took pains to vary my reading as much as possible, devoting certain hours of the day only to lectures and theological study and leaving others, and especially the evenings, for lighter literature and social recreation.

My studies extended over several terms. I followed the lectures of the most accredited leaders of Anglican thought with sincere interest. I took copious notes, and sought for further personal instruction and guidance if any point remained obscure and unexplained. I had opportunities, by personal intercourse both with pro-

fessors and students, to find out what the best minds were really thinking about Christianity and the Church. I spared no pains and labour to extract the permanent elements of Truth from mere passing tendencies of thought and the influences of a dominating school of doctrine. I made a supreme effort to discover for myself some reasonable and tenable position in the Anglican Church and thus to escape what was beginning to look very much like a complete shipwreck of faith. I attended a course of lectures on the Reformation from the Anglo-Catholic point of view. But my mind as well as my heart remained unsatisfied and unconvinced. My difficulties became more pronounced and accentuated and my soul found no safe harbour and resting place. I was charmed and fascinated by the learning and scholarship and manifest sincerity of the leaders of the High Church party. I appreciated their difficulty and sympathized with their aim. I saw how attractive their theory was and what a powerful influence it exercised upon the mind of the religious youth then preparing for the ministry of the Church. But I never for a moment ceased to look upon it as a theory only, or succeeded in persuading myself that it was a tenable position from the standpoint of history or from that of ordinary common sense. It was a source of never-ceasing wonder to me, that men who admitted so much would not or could not admit more, and that while

they recognized a great principle and constructed their theories upon it, they hesitated to follow it out in its logical application, and ended by doing violence to the most ordinary claims of reason and judgment.

How a High Churchman could admit that the Church had power to define a doctrine of the Faith in the fourth century of the Christian era, holding such definitions to be binding upon the conscience and intellect, but that that same Church had no such power in the eighth or ninth century, and that its definitions then were not binding, was a problem which I never succeeded in solving. Either the principle was a true one and involved acceptance of the entire system of Roman Catholic Doctrine, or it was a false one and destroyed the authority of any kind of dogmatic belief. But how it could be both false and true, how it was possible to accept the authority of the Church as the definer of doctrine at one period of Christian history and reconcile it with a denial of that authority and consequent rejection of its definitions at another, passed my comprehension. Either the Church was a Divine Institution and had a constant supernatural guidance and authority; or it was human and apt to err in points of Doctrine and Faith. I could accept one position or the other; but I could not accept both without tampering with my normal powers of judgment and reasoning.

I will shortly sketch the religious position as it

ultimately presented itself to my mind, and the intellectual problems which it seemed to me to involve.

The latest development of scholarly thought in the Anglican Church was very distinctly in favour of Catholic Doctrine. This fact was clearly brought out by the entire tone of the lectures which I attended both on dogmatic Theology and on the History of the Reformation. The works recommended for use and reference, moreover, left no manner of doubt on the subject. It was asserted that the chief benefit of "the religious revolution" of the sixteenth century undoubtedly consisted in the fresh appeal to Holy Scriptures, which had effaced doctrinal corruptions and accretions and restored the Catholic Church in England to its primitive purity and simplicity. But it was equally maintained, that with the sweeping away of abuses and perversions, much that was good and true in doctrine and practice had also been destroyed, and that the National Church was still to-day reeling under the blows which had been inflicted upon it by ill-instructed and misguided men. This was more especially true in the matter of doctrine. The Reformers, I was told, may have had a right to protest against certain abuses and corruptions, but they had no right to tamper with the dogmatic teaching as the Universal Church had received it, and as the Fathers and Bishops in Council had finally fixed and defined it. The modern appeal

to history had involved a re-examination of the actual circumstances and origins of the Reformation, and these had manifestly resulted in the practical rejection of Protestant doctrine and in the re-establishment of Catholic principles. The idea of the final authority of Holy Scripture in matters of Faith was thus virtually repudiated and could not in any case be sustained in any intelligible sense, since Scripture itself was on its trial, and serious doubts were entertained in the highest quarters as to the reasonableness of the claim of certain books to be admitted into the Sacred Canon. Holy Scripture could not be a final court of appeal so long as it was impossible to say definitely what was Scripture and what was not. It was further insisted that whatever the evils which the Reformation had wrought, there had been no break in the historic continuity of the Anglican Church. It was unquestionably a real and true branch of the Church Catholic ; it had a validly ordained priesthood and valid Sacraments and had retained, in her doctrine and practice, all those necessary essentials which go to establish catholicity and continuity. It was true that neither the Greek nor the Roman Communion acknowledged this catholicity, that, on the contrary, they repudiated the Anglican claim to valid orders ; but this arose from a misconception and from an imperfect acquaintance with the actual facts of the case, and was a difficulty which was bound

to vanish away with a better knowledge of the actual teaching of the Anglican Church and of the reasonableness of its claims.

The lectures on Doctrine were wholly Catholic in their tone. There was not even an attempt at a compromise. The phraseology, it is true, might be slightly different from that commonly adopted by Roman Catholic theologians, but there could remain no doubt as to the meaning which it was intended to convey. The fact remained that the accredited authorized teachers of the Church of the Reformation were teaching Catholic doctrines and principles, and were doing their utmost to reintroduce Catholic usages and practices.

And the principles of their system were still further illustrated by the tone and character of the entire Church life of the University. It was a constant practice, at several of the more popular of the local churches, to celebrate a daily and fairly accurate imitation of the Mass, and the doctrinal teaching turned almost entirely on the Great Christian Sacrifice as the Church's chief doctrine and act of worship. "Church Authority" and "Church Doctrine" were in everybody's mouth. The most famous men of the University were personally and wholly identified with this movement of thought, and gave unhesitating expression to their allegiance. Many of the more religiously minded amongst the undergraduates were known to practise Sacramental Con-

fession and prayer for the dead; and a large number of them most certainly stood committed to Catholic principles of thought.

There is undoubtedly a certain charm and fascination in this modern Anglo-Catholic movement, especially as it expresses itself in the religious life of a great University; and it can scarcely be a matter of surprise that so many very excellent minds find it difficult to resist its spell. It is supported by the best learning and scholarship of the day; it owns the allegiance of some of the most devout and representative of men; it goes a long way towards satisfying a moral and intellectual want which is at this present time making itself very universally felt. It renders it possible for an intelligent man to entertain the most "liberal and advanced views" of the claim and origin of the several books of Holy Scripture, and yet to hold fast to the great broad traditions and principles of the Faith: to continue protesting against the "errors" of Rome, while appropriating all the spiritual benefits of the great doctrines of the Catholic and Roman Church; to be loyal to the indubitable facts of history while defending in a sort of way the distinctly uncatholic policy of more than three hundred years. It is an attempt at a compromise between the principle of private judgment and that of Divine Authority as it is held by the Unchanging Church of God.

But is such a compromise possible, is it reasonable, is

it logical, will it ultimately find acceptance with the really instructed English mind? Are not the leaders of this movement tampering with their own judgment and, by deliberately ignoring the sandy foundation upon which they are building, themselves preparing the fall and overthrow of their fair structure? It is not a question, surely, of ideas and theories; it is a question of historic facts, and it is to History that we have to make our appeal. And History surely must evermore declare in plain and unmistakable language against the Anglican claim. I do not here purpose entering into technical details the actual value and significance of which the ordinary reader may not be able to estimate aright, and because such details are not really called for. The inquiry does not turn round subtle points of research and interpretation on which scholars alone are qualified to speak with authority, but round plain and undeniable facts on the practical bearing of which any intelligent Englishman of average common sense is in a position to pronounce judgment. And in a matter of this kind one grain of common sense is perhaps of infinitely more value than a hundredweight of learning.

Every rightly instructed Protestant knows that the English Reformers, so far from claiming Catholic continuity in the modern Anglican sense, gloried in their separation from the centre of Catholic unity and in their

repudiation of distinctly Catholic doctrine. Under Elizabeth the Protestant English Church as a new national institution became finally established, and the bloody events of that single reign demonstrate that Protestants and Catholics had as little union as light has with darkness. What are the 39 Articles if they are not a deliberate protest against fundamental Catholic doctrine and against the entire principle of sacerdotal and Sacramental Religion? In what intelligible sense can the Anglican Minister or Bishop who declares in his Articles of Faith that the sacrifices of masses are "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits" be a legitimate successor of the Catholic Priest who holds and teaches that in the Mass a real and true Sacrifice is offered to God and that the sacred elements become, by the act of valid consecration, the true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ? Could more forcible language have been invented to emphasize the hopeless antagonism of these respective doctrinal positions? In what intelligible sense could the men who teach the latter doctrine be the successors of those who teach the former? They are hopelessly at variance with each other *in principle* and belong to two totally different orders of thought. The Protestant Minister may disown his own articles of belief and celebrate what he is pleased to call "a Mass"; but who has authorized him to do so, who has consecrated and commissioned him

for this office? His own individual authority, based on his personal religious views; nothing else; and this authority separates him by a wide and impassable gulf from that long line of priestly men who handed on the true Catholic doctrine and practice from age to age, and who were of one mind as to the actual character of their office and function.

It is very difficult to understand how these plain facts, which do not really admit of views and opinion, can be so universally ignored, and how earnest men and women can allow themselves to be misled by the popular and plausible but surely wholly illogical arguments which are made to pass muster in the present day. It is one thing to acknowledge the reasonableness and attractiveness of the Anglo-Catholic doctrine and to construct upon it a very fair-looking system of religious thought; but it is surely quite a different thing to establish such a system, and to fit it on to the formulated expression of doctrinal principles which are fundamentally and hopelessly at variance with it. Anglo-Catholicism is an intellectual anomaly, a monstrosity, the child of a distorted imagination; and however much its ephemeral existence may be lengthened out, it cannot possibly become the ultimate creed of the English people. Many thoughtful men have again and again drawn attention to these plain and incontrovertible facts, and have shown the utter hopelessness of

these claims when considered from the standpoint of both common sense and history.

"As to Anglicanism," says Professor St. George Mivart in an article in the *Nineteenth Century*,[1] "its original sin against authority is manifest. The schismatical act of convocation of 1534 is an Act *ultra vires* on the principles till then universally accepted in England, and which made the Pope's assent to any considerable change needful even in the eyes of the State. When unity had been restored under good Queen Mary, nothing less than an ecclesiastical Revolution was needed to destroy it, and the ecclesiastical power in England was revolutionized. The Lower House of Convocation met and called on the Bishops to support Papal supremacy, which they nobly did. The consequence was that all the Bishops, with one exception, then living in England, were deprived for refusing to accept Elizabeth's supremacy. To regard the set of Calvinistic time-servers who were introduced into our cathedrals by that Queen as being any sort of continuation of the mediæval Church and successors of Augustine and his Bishops, seems to me as irrational as Agnosticism—that is as irrational as possible. The Calvinists so intruded by Elizabeth as little thought of consecrating Bishops, in the Catholic sense, or of ordain-

[1] "The Index and my Articles on Hell," *Nineteenth Century*, December, 1893.

ing 'Sacrificial Priests' as did Drs. Blomfield and Sumner and probably all the other Anglican Bishops of the days of my boyhood.

"I know nothing which seems at once so pathetic and so absurdly grotesque as for members of the Anglican Church to pretend to be *Catholics*. For that Church, as I have often said, I have sincere esteem. I owe to it much gratitude, and for many of its members I entertain most profound respect and admiration. Nevertheless it is impossible for me to regard seriously its claims to be sacerdotal, sacramental, authoritative, traditional, and Catholic. I can understand young men who have only known the Establishment of late years being blind to the absurdity of such claims; but how men more than sixty, who know the thoroughly Protestant character of the Church of their boyhood, can seriously regard it as having any pretensions to Catholicity, passes my comprehension.

"As to the essential characteristic of Authority, the utter absence of any authoritative teaching is, at this moment, being made most ludicrously manifest at the Church Congress at Birmingham, as reported in *The Times* of the 5th of October. There, to a very High Church speech by the amiable and admirable President of the English Church Union, Viscount Halifax, there succeeded another by Sir R. Lighton, in violent doctrinal contradiction to the other, and this was followed by

another by the Dean of Winchester pointing out the defects of 'cathedral worship,' and warning his hearers against the risks of sinking to the level of 'sacrificial worship.' On the next day the President, the Bishop of Worcester, declaimed against the Sacramental need of Episcopacy ; while Archdeacon Emery communicated a paper wherein, with great truth, hearers were complacently warned never to forget 'that the Church of England, under Elizabeth, was a Protestant body, differing nothing doctrinally from the Church of Switzerland, so far as its tests and conditions of communion were concerned.' Next came 'Father Ignatius,' masquerading as a Benedictine monk, and vehemently denouncing the unorthodoxy of the Rev. C. Gore, of *Lux Mundi* fame."

There is, as a matter of fact, not the faintest shadow of authority in any sphere of this confused system of thought. Any innovation in doctrine or ritual is initiated on the authority of an individual clergyman who speaks in lofty tones of "the Church," but who is bound to admit ultimately that that is a purely abstract conception and that he himself really is the Church. The Bishops are powerless both in the matter of doctrine and discipline. Sometimes they assent to and practise the same illegal and un-Protestant rites : sometimes they protest. But they seldom venture to proceed against a beneficed clergyman.

But I found a second, and in its essential aims and characteristics entirely different school of thought at work amongst the leaders of the modern Anglican school. These seemed to me to start with no specific doctrine or premise, but to attempt the construction of a religious system upon a critical examination of the history and origin of the several books of Holy Scripture. They admitted, in a certain sense, that the Bible contains disclosures of Divine Truth ; but, ignoring the past history and tradition of the Catholic Church and the Development of Doctrine, they subjected the Sacred Writings to the searching light of modern philological and documental science, and were consequently only now engaged in the process of making up their minds.

The results of this form of thought were to a certain extent already apparent. They were in the direction of an undermining of all Scriptural authority, and of the intellectual rejection of anything like a definite dogmatic belief. And these results were, of course, inevitable. Since there was reasonable doubt respecting *some* books and statements of Holy Scripture, and no doubt at all that several of them had no claim to form part of the Sacred Canon, it was but reasonable, for intelligent men, to suspend their judgment with regard to the others, and to await the final result of the present inquiry. It was felt to be not at all inconceivable that

the entire framework of Jewish and Christian thought might hereafter tumble to pieces, thus entirely freeing the intellect from the bondage of unreasonable and incomprehensible creeds. There were many eager and earnest adherents of this school of thought amongst the undergraduates of the University, and they had certainly no difficulty in defending their views on the strength of the deliberate statements of some of the most renowned and scholarly men of their time. But what was the logical outcome of this system of thought? It demonstrated in the plainest possible way, that if the Anglican Church was Catholic only in name and could not substantiate its modern claim, it was certainly not Protestant either, since it was most certainly engaged in destroying the great doctrine to which it owed its very life and existence. The appeal to Scripture, as a final authority in matters of Faith and individual liberty to interpret it, were some of the points on which the doctrinal Reformation had turned.

But what became of this article of Faith if the exercise of private judgment pulled the Bible to pieces and thereby destroyed the reasonableness of its claim to authority? The Church thus not only ceased to be Protestant, but it became unchristian; it undid the conservative work of at least fifteen centuries of Christian thought. And if the Church was neither Catholic nor Protestant in its essential characteristics, what was it?

What authority, human or Divine, could it be said to possess?

There came to my mind the striking words of Dr. Döllinger, taken from his work on *The Church and the Churches.* "The English Church," he says, "has the germ of discord and ecclesiastical dissolution in its normal condition and in its Confessions of Faith. It is a collection of heterogeneous theological propositions tied together by the Act of Uniformity; but which, in a logical mind, cannot exist by the side of one another, and whose effect upon the English Churchman is, that he finds himself involved in continual contradictions and disingenuousness, and can only escape the painful consciousness by sophistical reasoning." [1]

I have thus conveyed the impressions formed in my mind during my course of study by describing the conditions as I found them to exist at the University. The deductions, of course, are my own; but it was admitted again and again by thoughtful clergymen with whom I discussed matters, that they were fair and reasonable. Our difference lay in the circumstance that they accepted the state of things as a necessary and inevitable evil, and that I saw in them a confirmation of the difficulties which had for years past harassed and perplexed my mind. They destroyed, in

[1] Döllinger, *The Church and the Churches, or the Papacy and the Temporal Power*, p. 160.

my judgment, every reasonable claim to Divine origin which the National Church could be said to have. They seemed to me to demonstrate conclusively that it was a purely human and State institution.

Thus, by the force of logical and consistent thought, and by the action of the necessary laws of my mental life, I found myself once more face to face with the claims of the Church of Rome. And it is difficult for me to accurately describe the feelings and thoughts which the consciousness of this fact awakened within me. My mind urged the supreme claims and interests of Truth, for which I had already made many sacrifices. It pointed out very clearly that it was not a matter of sentiment, nor a question of ultimate consequences in the direction of temporal consideration ; but that it was pre-eminently a question of Truth and Fact. My feelings, on the other hand, rebelled against the very thought of fully and fairly examining the claims of Rome. Whither was I drifting, what had come to me that I could entertain even the thought of the possibility of Rome being in the right? But there was no evading the matter: there remained no choice. Either Rome was the divinely appointed Teacher of men, the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost, the spouse of Christ, having in her keeping the Gospel promises and the valid Sacraments and the gifts of life: or dogmatic truth and certainty were not to be found ; the promises of

Christ were literary forgeries; His recorded emphatic expressions and declarations the mere after-thought of theology. Rationalism or a philosophic Deism were then the only other alternatives. And in the choice between these two to me equally formidable and dreadful alternatives, my mind staggered and became bewildered and, for a very brief season, experienced the most fearful and distressing doubts, not as to the existence of God or the historic reality of the Person of the Saviour; but respecting the actual character and purpose of His work. Was there a way, I asked myself, of ignoring the facts of History and of Scripture or of giving them some different interpretation? Could the arguments of Strauss and Renan, or of other modern rationalistic writers be sustained? Was it conceivable that Christianity was, after all, nothing more than a moral system, perverted and distorted by the schoolmen of later times and perhaps misunderstood by half-instructed men from the very first? Could the effect of the Christian Doctrine on the world's moral life be explained on normal and natural grounds, and had the saints and marytrs laboured under hallucinations? Must the searching mind of the present age face the painful fact that its craving for Truth and Certainty were never likely to be stilled?

I am not conscious that my inward spiritual perception of the great truths of Christianity, of the Incarnation,

the Atonement and the true character of sin ever became darkened, or that my inmost soul ceased even for a moment to be loyal to Christ my God. But my mind was overwrought with the severity of the conflict and, for a brief space, it shrunk from its stern and painful duty. "Liberalism in Religion" as it is falsely called, that arch-enemy of the soul and of Truth, against which Cardinal Newman never ceased to warn and to protest, offered a safe and certain refuge to my perplexed mind and in any case saved me from the dreadful alternative of embracing the Roman Catholic Faith. My intellect found temporary rest by dismissing the question of doctrinal Truth and by seeking refuge in the moral elements of the Gospel teaching.

It is with grief and unutterable sadness of heart that I now make this confession. That momentary aberration and distrust of God is the one dark blot upon the entire history of my journey of Faith, for I am conscious that I was in that one respect most certainly disloyal to my own inmost feelings and convictions. It was a rebellion both of my will and of my intellect, and a passing distrust of Him who was so wonderfully leading me out of the labyrinth of human error into the fulness and brightness of Truth. I tremble to-day at the possible consequence of this wilful opposition to known Truth. It might have proved a turning-point in the history of my religious life and, as in the case of so

many thousands, it might have ended in an entire moral collapse and loss of Faith. I know now that God leads and guides and instructs and enlightens, but that He never compels. The decision, after all, rests entirely with the individual soul. And there are times when all the circumstances for embracing Truth are favourable, when the intellect is convinced and the heart is awakened. That moment generally comes unexpectedly, and passes away very quickly ; and sometimes when it has gone it has gone for ever. It is the crisis in the history of the soul's life, and on its decision depends an eternity. God may after that make fresh appeals to the soul ; but the favourable impressions may have passed, the surrounding circumstances have changed, and the deadened heart become incapable or indisposed to respond.

Cardinal Newman gives eloquent expression to this thought, and points out the danger of missing those golden opportunities which come seldom, in some instances only once in the course of a lifetime. He says it is the duty of the man whose mind is made up "to join the Church at once ; he must not delay ; let him be cautious in counsel, but prompt in execution. This it is that makes Catholics so anxious about him : it is not that they wish him to be precipitate ; but, knowing the temptations which the evil one ever throws in our way, they are lovingly anxious for his soul, lest he has come to the point of conviction, and is passing it and is losing

his chance of conversion. If so, it may never return; God has not chosen every one to salvation. It is a rare gift to be a Catholic; it may be offered to us once in our lives, and never again; and if we have not seized on the 'accepted time,' nor known 'in our day the things which are for our peace,' oh, the misery for us! Oh, the awful thought for all eternity! oh, the remorseful sting, 'I was called, I might have answered, and I did not!'"[1]

But I am sometimes tempted to think that with me this temporary eclipse of faith may, after all, have been an integral part of the divine plan: that it was a necessary element in my religious education. It certainly brought me face to face with a system of thought which is to many minds the only possible escape from the present religious confusion, and which is doing its destructive work in the Anglican Establishment.

But it is scarcely necessary to devote time and space to a consideration of the doctrine of the Broad or Liberal Church Party. Its effects are already sufficiently apparent. It is Unitarianism in attractive disguise and in its ultimate inferences. There is a certain kind of logic, no doubt, in the endeavour to escape the dogmatic difficulty by seeking refuge in the purely moral truths of Christianity or to ignore or avoid the problem of Doctrine. Many amongst the intelligent of the laity

[1] *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, p. 232

certainly accept this position and regard it even as consistent with loyal Church membership. But it is surely a hopeless thing to seek to fit it into the *system* of the Anglican Church, or to teach it in any intelligible way with Anglican formularies. The Anglican ecclesiastical mind is unquestionably expert in the art of performing feats of intellectual gymnastics which fill even the sympathetic onlooker with amazement; but it may be reasonably doubted whether it will ever succeed in accomplishing this particular feat. It is unfortunately possible to establish different and mutually antagonistic views of important doctrines from different portions of the same Book of Common Prayer and the Articles; but how the entire disappearance of those doctrines is to be supported from any such portions or from all of them together, is a problem which has hitherto shown no signs of solution. So far Broad Churchmen have escaped the difficulty on the theory, that the Anglican formularies express changing forms of Christian thought, and that their more distinct doctrinal utterances are only relatively and tentatively true. But it is extremely difficult to suppose that Broad Church principles will ever present a satisfactory and permanent solution of the Anglican difficulty, or that they will ultimately find acceptance with really thoughtful minds. They may afford a temporary resting-place for a soul in distress; they can never become for it

a permanent tower of refuge. Liberalism in Revealed Religion is a contradiction in terms and an intellectual absurdity. It is a purely negative attitude, and consequently morally worthless. A thing is either true and in that case must be emphatically stated and defined in clear terms, or it is not true and must be repudiated in equally uncompromising language. It cannot be both true and false even on principles of Anglican Theology. Either our Lord made an Atonement for sin, and by His blood-shedding reconciled man with God, thereby changing the entire relation between the Creator and the creature ; or He made no Atonement, and the relation of man to God remains unchanged. No amount of sophistry will enable an intelligent man, who really thinks about the matter, to escape these two alternatives. The Broad Church principle begs the whole question. It leaves all the essential points untouched, ignores the facts of history and of the existence of Christianity as the greatest spiritual force in the present day, and reduces a Divine Revelation to a moral system, reducing man practically to the moral helplessness of pre-Christian times. And it leaves the greatest of all the questions of the human heart, to which Christianity claims to have brought an answer, wholly unanswered.

The entire scheme of redemption by sacrifice, as we trace it through the New Testament back to the Jewish Church and see its expression in contemporary heathen

practices, is built up upon the greatest of all facts in human life—sin. Sin is that element in our moral nature which scientific achievement and philosophic ingenuity have never succeeded in effacing or destroying. It asserts itself in its manifold manifestations wherever man is to be found. We may contrive, by intellectual sophistries, to tone it down or to ignore its existence; we shall never eradicate it or banish it. It is an experience, a consciousness, a tendency which defies definition, but which never ceases to make itself felt. And the human heart will again and again find itself constrained to acknowledge this fact whenever it recovers from its temporary aberrations, and again becomes true to itself. And this consciousness, or flaw, or experience, suggests many eager and disquieting questions which demand a solution, because the same heart which asks the question has also the assurance that it is answerable.

The Christian scheme of Redemption is the only fully satisfying answer which has ever been given. Jesus addressed Himself to this hostile element at work in human nature, and furnished an infallible means by which it can be overcome and controlled. The triumph of Christianity is chiefly due to its victory over sin and its doctrine of Redemption by suffering. The moment this doctrine is deviated from or lost sight of, Christianity itself changes its character and

becomes a mere human philosophy. It is no longer Christianity in the historic sense. It is another Gospel (ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον). The Broad Church principle denies the flaw in human nature, the fall of man in any definite and concrete sense, and consequently gets rid of the entire scheme of Atonement and Redemption in its historic orthodox acceptation. It substitutes some mystical philosophical conception which the ordinary intellect cannot even grasp. But it forgets that a philosophical denial of an elementary truth does not necessarily carry with it moral conviction. It forgets that there are self-evident truths, firmly rooted in man's moral consciousness, which require no definition. And thus the question of the heart, dictated by the sense of loss and sin, remaining unanswered, the heart is thrown back upon itself, and misses the chief end and purpose of that Religion of which the modern doctrine is a mere attractive-looking counterfeit. And the ultimate outcome of this system of thought, in all logical minds at least, is of necessity unbelief—utter loss of faith: doubt of individual sinfulness and moral responsibility, and denial of Christ's Redemption and Restoration. This fact is amply illustrated by the experiences of those who have had opportunities of studying the evolution of modern religious belief. It is a necessary process of mind-action. "Unlearn Catholicism," says Dr. Newman, "and you become Protestant, Unitarian,

Deist, Pantheist, Sceptic, in a dreadful but infallible succession, only not infallible by some accident of your position, of your education, and of your cast of mind; only not infallible if you dismiss the subject of Religion from your mind, deny yourself your reason, devote your thoughts to moral duties, or dissipate them in the engagements of the world."

Thus my religious life passed into a state of confusion and chaos. I saw the underlying inconsistency in each of the more distinctive schools of thought acknowledged to be existent in the Church of which I was an ordained minister. My Protestantism was hopelessly and irretrievably undermined. The Anglo-Catholic position was impossible. I had discovered no kind of authority worthy of the name in any sphere of the Church's life. I had an intellectual grasp of some Catholic doctrines; but they were isolated truths, scarcely admitting of adaptation to the principles still dominating my mind. Meanwhile I was trying hard to persuade myself that Dogmatic Truth was a delusion and a snare, and that liberal principles were quite reconcilable with fact and history; and I sometimes imagined that I had really succeeded in doing this. But in whatever degree I may have satisfied my mind, I never managed to persuade my heart, nor to stifle the convictions and perceptions which the Spirit of Truth had implanted within it. I was simply "drifting," with a vague sort of hope that

"circumstances" or some unforeseen event would terminate my difficulty, or introduce into it some new element.

There was one feeling, however, which had increasingly taken possession of me. It was an intense distrust of the Anglican Church and everything connected with it. I viewed all its doings with suspicion, and questioned everything I heard in the pulpit and out of it. I knew that what I heard one Sunday was as likely as not to be contradicted the next, and that the doctrine expounded depended wholly upon the particular church which I happened to attend. I entirely discontinued receiving Holy Communion. It had ceased to have any meaning for me, and to convey anything definite to my heart and mind. I attended mid-day celebrations of the Protestant "Mass"; but, like the larger proportion of the congregation, left the Church after the sermon. What else could I do? If the Catholic doctrine were true, it was certain that I was in danger of approaching with unclean hands and a doubting, disloyal heart, which shrank from laying open its sins and from cleansing itself from defilement. Then I had, perhaps, no right to present myself at a Protestant Communion Table at all. If, on the other hand, the Protestant doctrine were true, why was I present in that Church, identifying myself with ceremonies and teaching which I had repudiated

by my assent to the Articles and my ordination vows?

In now pondering over these spiritual conflicts and struggles of soul, I see no ground for believing that I exaggerated the matter unduly, or that my conscience was morbid and over-sensitive. The subject presents itself to me in the same light now in which it did then, and I fail to see how any one really alive to the difficulty is to escape a similar process of mental analysis. The circumstance that to thousands of well-meaning people the difficulty never occurs at all, is surely no valid argument, since there are thousands and tens of thousands of people who never give any really serious thought to Religion, and who have learnt, from their very earliest age, to accommodate themselves to the ideas and customs of the sphere into which they are born.

Or is it the inevitable destiny of the seeker after Truth, who refuses to be bound by the conventional and false ideas of his time, to lose his mental equilibrium in the process, and to fail of the glorious promise made to those who seak earnestly and with a single and undivided aim? The entire history of religious thought and the most ordinary moral feeling surely witness against the tenableness of such a preposterous assumption.

But the unforeseen event which was to introduce a new element into my religious inquiries and to help

me a step further on my journey of Faith, occurred sooner than I had anticipated.

I had the offer of an incumbency in an important provincial town. It was not altogether a sphere of work such as I could have desired ; but I had practically no choice in the matter. It was necessary, for more reasons than one, that I should, as soon as possible, return to my active clerical duties, and I had already, from time to time, made inquiries in this direction. Any hesitation on my part was overruled by the prospect of comparative freedom and independence. I should be free to preach the truths which I really held and believed. There would no longer be any need of adapting them to the ideas and feelings of ecclesiastical superiors or colleagues, or of weighing and considering the doctrinal views of parishioners. In this latter sense and considering the state of my mind, the offer was certainly a tempting one, and, if accepted, provided for me the only possible post which I should be justified in accepting. But the force of circumstances which laid upon me the necessity of seeking work did not solve my intellectual difficulties. A very searching question at once presented itself to my mind. What was to be the aim and character of my teaching? What was to be my doctrine? It would now be no longer possible for me to avoid some clearly defined course of thought and action. What was

to be my manner of celebrating the Holy Eucharist? It was certain that every detail of ceremonial as well as no ceremonial at all had become points of controversy and received doctrinal interpretation. A compromise would be impossible. If I took the "eastward position" and elevated the elements, if I genuflected in passing the "altar," I should be designated a High Churchman. If, on the other hand, I took my position at the north end or adopted the custom of evening celebrations, my people would put me down as a Low Churchman. And this would be done before I should have an opportunity even of opening my mouth on these points and of explaining my position. My views on the Eucharist were certainly neither Protestant nor Anglican; they were, intellectually at least, Catholic. I was certain that it was infinitely more than a supper or a memorial; I was equally certain that the Prayer Book, in its general aim and statements, warranted a merely Protestant and subjective view. I had heard of nothing that could materially alter the conclusions at which I had so far arrived. Whatever therefore my views might be on other points, on this one I had intellectual certainty; and, even if I did not teach the Catholic doctrine as I understood it, it would be impossible for me to say or do anything that could in the least be interpreted as denying it. The hesitation I experienced on this point arose not from any doubt respecting the doctrine, but from the dictates of

my moral feeling. I felt that it would be an act of deliberate dishonesty to teach a Catholic doctrine in a Protestant Church, and with the aid of formularies which were constructed to repudiate that doctrine. My only possible course would be a compromise, a golden mean between two extremes—in any case until I had finally made up my own mind. I could adopt a moderate Anglican ritual, a sort of moral tight-rope dance, avoiding the gulf on either side and committing myself to no pronounced doctrine either way. This plan seemed to me to be a very unsatisfactory one, and certainly contrary to my normal modes of thought and action; but it was the only one which suggested itself in my then state of mind and which offered an escape from my difficulty. I defended it to myself by looking upon it as a purely tentative proceeding and as admitting of modifications in accordance with the final state of my mind and my ultimate belief.

But the chief difficulty remained. On what principle was I to construct my teaching: on the Protestant, or on the Catholic? Was it a question of organic union with the true Church of Christ as the visible source and organ of the Divine life—a matter of Sacraments and ordinances, of objective religion? Or was it a matter of personal faith, binding the soul to the Saviour and securing its safety and salvation irrespective of these. My mind still rebelled against any attempt to confound these two

lines of thought or to efface their clear and distinct outlines. I was as convinced as ever that they represented mutually destructive systems of belief, and involved wholly dissimilar conceptions of the work and operation of Jesus Christ. But I felt that I need entertain no unnecessary and exaggerated scruples. Religion covered a wide and fruitful field, and it would be possible for me to teach many important and valuable truths without taking doctrinal sides. I should have ample opportunity, in any case, to gain the affection and confidence of my people, and by that time my mind would perhaps clear itself and admit of more decided doctrinal teaching. I had certain deliberate convictions, which were the fruit of persistent thought and painstaking research, and these could be made to form the pivot of my work. I should have an opportunity of judging for myself how far they admitted of practical application. In any case, the extent of my knowledge was, of necessity, the measure of my responsibility, and I could but place my best at the service of my people.

But I must acknowledge that I was not wholly convinced of the reasonableness of my method of argument. I could not defend it from the standpoint of "first principles"; it seemed to be defensible only from that of "present necessity." There were hours when the most intense restlessness took possession of me, and I was at war with myself: when all the foundations seemed

to be out of course. It appeared to me then as though God had hidden His face from me, and had left me to myself; and even rebellious feelings took possession of my heart. Why was it my lot to be tortured by these difficulties and perplexing problems? Why could I not, like other intelligent clergymen, accept the position in which I found myself? Why should I be driven to a restless search after a Truth which seemed to be incessantly escaping my grasp? I was, I knew, full of weakness and moral infirmity; but in this matter I was true and desperately in earnest. I was anxious to know His Truth—that Truth upon which He had Himself declared the world's present and future happiness to depend. He had Himself promised that the earnest seeker should find. Why did He not allow me to find? Why did He withhold rest and certainty from my soul, and place me in a position of such great temptation and danger? How often, in those days, did the earnest cry go up from my heart, "How long, O Lord, how long? Wilt Thou not have mercy and deliver the heart of Thy servant?"

How many times, in after life, have I had occasion to realize the truth of that mighty saying, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." What would have been the result had He listened to my cry, and perhaps allowed me to find rest and contentment in some half-truth, in some Anglican

shibboleth? I might have been a prosperous Anglican Rector, respected and esteemed by my parishioners, and looked up to by intelligent men for my "comprehensive" grasp of doctrine and my "breadth of view"; but with my soul deadened and my heart withered, and with my highest aspirations crushed and trodden under foot. The full light of His Truth would never have shone across my path. I have followed with interest the course of my friends and colleagues in the Anglican Church. Some of them, and they are those who have known nothing of the fight of Faith, are occupying influential positions; the temporal gifts which follow success have come to them one by one; they have in the world's opinion made the best of their life and their opportunity. Some are now finding their way to positions of influence and prosperity. All of them are free from the ordinary cares and anxieties of life. Temporal loss and ceaseless anxiety, on the other hand, have accompanied my religious struggles, dark clouds and shadows have lowered upon the path of my life, the dearest friends have become estranged from me. But would I exchange my lot with theirs? Have I from within the sheltering arms of the Mother of the Saints cast one single glance back at the City of Confusion? What are loss and earthly pain in comparison with the soul's most perfect peace? What are worldly success and attainment in the presence of the calmness

and certainty of Faith—the sense of perfect security within the pale of the Unchanging Church of God? He has led me by tortuous paths and over a stony road, by a way which seemed dark to me sometimes and which I knew not; but the goal was nothing less than the promised land, and my new home the City of the Living God. The doubts and difficulties are gone; the soul is in security and the heart is at rest. Soon the shadows of life, too, are bound to pass away, because life itself will come to its close, and then how great will be my gain, how small my loss, how joyfully will the soul break out in its song of triumph—

> "The strife is o'er, the battle done,
> The victory of life is won,
> The song of triumph has begun,
> Alleluia!"

But, to return to my record of the actual sequence of events. As already stated, I had my scruples with regard to my method of reasoning. I was not quite certain whether my view as to the extent of my knowledge being the measure of my responsibility, was altogether tenable. I decided to consult a recognized Anglican authority. I fixed upon a gentleman who held a high position in the esteem of the University, both for his personal piety and his learning. He was supposed to have the most accurate historical knowledge of the real position and prospects

of the Anglican Church. I laid my difficulty before him, and explained the nature of my scruples in the face of the responsible duties awaiting me. I stated in outline the history of my religious life, and the experiences through which I had passed. I finally asked guidance as to my future career. Was the measure of my present knowledge and conviction the measure of my responsibility, or was it my duty to teach whatever the Church of which I was a minister put into my mouth? The answer came without a moment's hesitation, "Of course it is your bounden duty to teach what the Church, which sends you, authorizes you to teach." I replied: "In that case will you be good enough to tell me precisely what the Church does teach? I have tried hard for several years to find out, but I have failed. I have only met with 'opinions' and 'views' and 'schools of thought'; but I have not met with what I could reasonably regard as 'authoritative doctrine.'" The Anglican authority was manifestly perplexed by my bold and direct question, which I kept strictly in view and which I would allow no conventional statement or shibboleth to obscure. I again and again emphasized my point: where was the real doctrine of the Church of England? In what book or formulary, independent of "party views," was I to look for it? Or to what person or institution in the Church was I to appeal for a finally binding decision and judgment?

The incidents connected with this interview are indelibly impressed upon my memory, and will remain engraved upon it to the end of my life. It was an exhibition of the hopeless weakness and inconsistency of the Anglican Church. My persistent searching question elicited the reply, that for all practical purposes, there was neither doctrine nor authority in the Church. The Prayer Book was both Catholic and Protestant, and useful as showing the great reactions of religious thought. Matters were in a state of transition in the Anglican Body, and doctrine scarcely in its final and fixed form—an inevitable result of the religious revolution of the sixteenth century. It was our duty to humble ourselves under the chastening hand of God, and to pray incessantly for the healing of our unhappy divisions. The question as to how this transitional doctrine affected the present or the future life of this generation, and how it could be reconciled with the necessary claims of an authoritative Religion, did not seem to enter into the calculation of the Anglican authority.

What could I do but once more exercise my private judgment, and allow myself to drift, by the mere force of circumstances, into a new and independent sphere of work?

V.

MY INCUMBENCY.

IT would but weary the reader and in nowise aid the chief aim which I have in view in writing these records, were I to give a further detailed account of the state of things in religious matters, as I found them to exist in the town in which my church was situated. The picture was much the same in its essential outlines and characteristics. Almost every form of thought, and of no thought in particular, was represented and had its loyal and enthusiastic adherents. Every expression of dissent found a voice and utterance in some district and congregation. The two great schools of doctrine in the Anglican Church were, of course, conspicuous by an earnest and determined propaganda of their respective views and principles amongst the local inhabitants. The Bishop of the diocese winked at every extravagance of unlawful teaching and ritual. In several of the more prominent and fashionable churches there

were frequent early celebrations of the Holy Communion, resembling, in their most important characteristics, the Sacrifice of the Mass of the Catholic Church. Incense was used at their celebrations and the dead of the parish were prayed for; occasional public notice was given of "solemn requiems" to be chanted on special days and occasions. There were notices affixed to the doors of these churches appointing days and hours at which certain of the parochial clergy could be found in the church for "private conversation."

In other churches of the same locality this teaching was incessantly and violently repudiated as destructive of the pure Reformation doctrines and dangerous to the welfare and liberty of the National Church. The people were warned to beware of the seductive influence of external show and ecclesiastical pomp, and to continue in the freedom wherewith the Reformation had set them free. From time to time public meetings were held by the Protestant Churchmen of the town, at which fervent appeals were made to English common sense and fair play, and where attention was drawn to the national peril in which such a progressive return to Rome would be certain to involve this free country.

I discovered that the clergy, representing these mutually antagonistic schools of thought, lived in personal and public enmity with each other and cultivated no kind

of social intercourse. This, of course, could scarcely be a matter for surprise, seeing that each made it his aim to neutralize and destroy the spiritual work of the other. But, as in so many other centres of the Anglican Church life, the public mind viewed this state of things with comparative equanimity. It was looked upon as a sort of necessary evil, which was part and parcel of English national life and must be accepted as such by all sensible men. It was true that it was a source of endless bitterness and confusion, causing a household of Christians to be divided against itself and the chief aim of the Christian Religion to be wholly subverted and lost sight of: but then it was not wise to have hard and fast rules; it was the characteristic of an Englishman to be liberal-minded, and why should not each man do his best to discover and assimilate that portion of Christian Truth which seemed best calculated to satisfy the special needs of his nature?

In my then state of mind I sought frequent opportunities of discussing the state of things with sensible men, who took no very active interest in controversial questions, and who viewed things in a certain sense from an outsider's standpoint. It was of great interest to me to discover what such men really thought about the strange problems and anomalies presented by the National Church, and how things appeared to minds which had not, like mine, "fogged themselves" with

speculative controversy. I can honestly say that I have met with very few persons who had thought the matter out fairly and consistently, and who had independently arrived at any principle or conclusion. I invariably found that the large proportion of the laity, especially those of the upper middle class who are so conspicuous for their practical interest in all matters of Church organization, are wholly dominated by the bias which their peculiar environments have given to their life. Few know why they believe the doctrine which they so ardently defend. It has come to them as their birthright—the belief of their father or their mother, or as the result of their accidental local association with some particular church. Those who have identified themselves with the High Church movement have for the most part done so, not because they have changed their mind on vital truths and on the grounds of a better and fuller examination of the history of the Church and its doctrine, but because they believed in some particular clergyman who happened to "go high," or because they did not care to separate from their parish church, in which they had worshipped for so many years. Where the early bias is exceptionally strong, the mind naturally separates itself from the new movement and becomes pugnacious; but its hostility is scarcely ever due to deep-seated and well-grounded conviction. On the whole, however, sentiment and educational bias

are the ruling elements which move and sway the laity of the Anglican Church, and which determine their belief.

I have met, it is true, with many thoughtful men and women of the upper middle class, who had some time or other given some thought to the matter and to whom the "unhappy divisions" in their Church caused the most genuine distress. But they had never got beyond a certain point. Technical difficulties, which they were unable to master, had invariably barred the way and they had finally, like their families and friends, found refuge in that doctrinal system to which the accidental association of life, or some personal preference, happened to point.

And so it comes to pass that a certain law of "natural selection" is in constant active operation in the Church of England, each person appropriating that fragment of Truth which suits him best, and clinging to it with all his might and main. There is, no doubt, some little consolation in the thought that, in a thousand instances, no great personal responsibility can be said to attach to such selection, seeing that the mind is so frequently scarcely alive to the transcendent importance of the matter and that it is, through absence of the necessary information, incapable of forming a right and fair judgment. It is most certainly true, as Cardinal Manning was never tired of pointing out, that the English people "have not rejected the Faith." They

were robbed of it by state authority and by the violent act of a brutalized and voluptuous king. It was man in his most degenerate form who laid his unclean hands on the work of divine perfection, quite forgetful of the fact that, although human in outward appearance, it was held in cohesion by a power different from and higher than his own. And the divine element removed, the work crumbled and fell to pieces; the pattern of marvellous design and beauty was destroyed and man was left, like a naughty and unruly child, standing helpless and miserable with only pieces and fragments in his hand.

The Catholic Religion may well be compared to some such work of exceptional and supernatural skill and workmanship; to some ancient manuscript, for instance, of beautiful design and of high value. The best scholarship of every age, combined with the most profound moral insight, have been at work, not only in the effort to decipher the manuscript and to make it accessible to every mind, but to elucidate the full meaning of its separate parts and to place these in their true relation and proportion to the general context. But the perverse human mind, not content with the authorized and universally received version of the precious manuscript, and distrusting the unanimous verdict of the ages, rose in opposition against it; and made a supreme and stubborn effort to get possession of the document itself in order to

subject it to its own one-sided and immature judgment: and in the conflict which ensued, the manuscript was torn to pieces. Its earlier and legitimate interpreters knew the text as well as its interpretation by heart, and were consequently in a position to reconstruct it for the future use of the more reasonable portion of mankind. But the malcontents departed each with his portion and fragment, from which they made incessant but vain attempts to construct the substance of the whole. The fragmentary portion, disconnected and isolated, yields different readings, and consequently does not admit of being fitted into the context. Pressed unduly it becomes positive error. The fragments themselves forming as they do different portions of the manuscript, and being in the hands of mutually antagonistic parties, admit of different construction, one apparently destroying and contradicting the other. And there is no prospect of peace and unanimity, until the malcontents acknowledge their error and appeal to the earliest and only authorized interpreter to construct for them once more the true text of the original document.

This simile illustrates, to my mind, the relation in which the Catholic Church stands to the various fragmentary expressions of the Christian Religion now dominating human thought.

In my own sphere of work I met with no marked

difficulty or opposition. A few only seceded from the congregation after one or two Sundays; but others came to fill their places. The moderate ritual which I adopted in the celebration of the Eucharist was pleasing to some and displeasing to others; but it awakened no form of active hostility. Any misgiving on this point was set at rest as soon as I got an opportunity of explaining my views. Strange to say, they seemed to suit all parties. I laid stress upon that element in the doctrine which constitutes a protest against any attempt to make the Sacrament void by reducing it to a mere pious memorial, and I bolstered up the Catholic principle by common-sense illustrations and similes.

In other respects my teaching turned round the moral truths of the Gospel. I strictly avoided raising any kind of controversial question, and where these unavoidably presented themselves, I managed to hold the mean between great extremes, showing the elements of Truth to be found on both sides. I never stopped to inquire how my people labelled me, and to what school of thought they considered me to belong. In the accepted phraseology of the day, I was "high" on some points, "low" on others, and certainly broad and liberal on all. In a certain sense, therefore, I was a man without colour and belonged really to no school: I was a school unto myself. And

this was really so in the truest sense. Some of my doctrines I had from history, some I based upon the dictates of reason and intuition, on others I suspended my judgment. I was therefore Bishop and Church and Scripture and Prayer Book, all rolled in one: all these authorities were centred in myself. I subjected them to my judgment, accepted or rejected their dicta as will and feeling directed.

This was a natural and normal result of the chaotic state of my mind, in which truths and errors and half-truths were inextricably commingled, one incessantly acting upon and modifying the other. And I am fully persuaded that this kind of thing pleases the average Anglican mind, and that the parson who can carry it out most successfully, who can both run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, will always be regarded as a "safe" man. Cardinal Newman expressed this in very forcible language in his *Prospects of the Anglican Church*, where he says: "A man who can set down half a dozen general propositions, which escape from destroying one another only by being diluted into truisms, who can hold the balance between opposites so skilfully as to do without fulcrum or beam, who never enunciates a truth without guarding himself from being supposed to exclude the contrary, who holds that Scripture is the only authority, yet that the Church is to be deferred to, that faith only justifies, yet that it does not justify without

works, that grace does not depend on the Sacraments, yet is not given without them, that Bishops are a divine ordinance, yet those who have them not are in the same religious condition as those who have; this is your safe man and the hope of the Church; this is what the Church is said to want, not party men, but sensible, temperate, sober, well-judging persons, to guide it through the channel of no-meaning, between the Scylla and Charybdis of Aye and No."

But it is certainly a fact, that doctrinal vagueness is specially acceptable to the average Anglican Churchman. It imparts a certain flavour of liberal-mindedness to things, and saves the mind from being driven to uncomfortable and disquieting conclusions. The Churchman of the most modern type condemns extreme Evangelicalism no less than extreme Ritualism, not because he is convinced of the falsehood and absurdity of their respective claims, but because they enforce distinct truths, which carry with them distinct and serious responsibilities. And Religion cannot be tolerated when it transcends the bounds of propriety and good sense, and causes a loyal Churchman to become "unsettled" and disquieted. He infinitely prefers to remain secure and "settled" in his accustomed doctrinal fog.

I am not thus seeking to defend my own course or attitude of thought. It was defensible only on the

grounds that it was a purely tentative position into which "circumstances" had forced me. I never for a moment ceased to consider it illogical and untenable, and to look upon it as expressive of a purely temporary and transitory state of mind. I was working and searching and praying incessantly all the while, that additional light might be given to me, and that a state of things under which I was beginning to suffer bodily as well mentally, might speedily terminate.

My system of teaching, if indeed it can be said to deserve such a name, worked very well so long as I remained in the pulpit and my people in their pews. It always seemed to me to break down hopelessly, when I found myself engaged in more direct and personal work. In their social intercourse with clergymen, most people are apt to touch upon the subject of the Church and doctrine, and I was at all times only too eager to direct the conversation into such channels. I was possessed of a feverish anxiety to speak of the things which were incessantly present to my soul, and thus in some measure to ease the burden which was weighing it down. I remember, on one occasion, being most deeply and painfully impressed by a conversation which I had with a lady who had much local renown for her self-denying works of Christian charity. She was not a member of my congregation, but had begged me to aid her in some good work, which she had carried on independently for a number of years.

I made some reference, in the course of conversation, to the subject of an address I had just delivered, and asked her whether she agreed with the doctrine upon which I had constructed my argument. She replied, with evident pain and sadness, that she had no doctrine, and that the conflicting systems of Church teaching were a source of the most intense mental distress to her. She felt, she said, the need of some definite principle not only for herself and her own religious life, but in the interests of those for whom she was working and whose souls she was so anxious to benefit. But she had so far failed to make up her mind. She had heard several of the more renowned clergymen of the town ; but one contradicted the other, and she had become confused and bewildered so that she did not know herself what she really believed.

To my question, whether she had ever laid her difficulty before the clergyman of whose church she was a member, she replied that she did not know of a single clergyman in the town in whom she had sufficient confidence to lay bare the real state of her soul, and whom she believed capable of dealing with it. They seemed to her so entirely taken up with the social duties of their church and with fighting their neighbours, that the very thought of seeking spiritual help from them repelled her. I do not, of course, lay undue stress upon an isolated statement of this character. It will have

little weight with very many minds. It had very great weight with me because I had heard so many like them, and it seemed to formulate the thoughts and feelings which were working in my own heart. The lady belonged to the sincerely pious and thoughtful portion of the Anglican Communion and was engaged in important Christian work. She was, in a certain sense, representative of an order of mind which is most undoubtedly beginning to make itself felt in the National Church. Would that they gave expression to the hidden doubts which are slumbering in their hearts, and that they were brave enough to express them in loud and forcible language!

But what a Church was this, in which such anomalies were possible and had to be tolerated as a normal condition! An earnest Christian woman, engaged in good works and in instructing the ignorant, and diligent in attendance at public worship and in frequenting the Sacrament, and absolutely uncertain as to what she herself really believed respecting Christ and His Truth!

To describe accurately the actual state of my mind at this time is no easy matter. I had days of the most intense unrest, when the sense of uncertainty and insecurity seemed almost to consume me and I spent many hours of the day in searching out some point of doctrine, or some problem in history. Such days were not infrequently followed by a certain calmness and

submission to the inevitable. My position clerically was an exceptionally pleasant and attractive one, and social duties and engagements had a certain influence in subduing, for a time at least, the storm which was raging in my soul. For days and weeks sometimes, I succeeded in forgetting the doubt which was undermining the peace and restfulness of my life, and in silencing the voice which persisted in making itself heard in my heart. And most people know how greatly this kind of process is facilitated by contact with that sphere of everyday life in which the predominating influence is indifference, and where kind, good-natured, and certainly not thoughtless men and women exist very comfortably without settling its most urgent and important affair. But the doubts always returned: sometimes they faced me in some part of my sermon or some portion of the services of the Church; sometimes when in the act of celebrating Holy Communion, an unaccountable conviction would take possession of me, that I was no real priest and that I had no right at all either to celebrate the Eucharist or to be found in that place. Had I acted upon such feelings, I should have torn off my vestments and quitted the church. But "reason" always gained the upper hand. It was not right to give way to such feelings. After all, how did I know that they were not morbid in their origin, and perhaps inspired by the prince of evil?

And so the conflict of my soul continued. I did my work with a certain degree of interest, but my heart was not in it; there was the element of doubt and hesitation in all my utterances. I saw very clearly that, however necessary and important the truths to which I gave expression might be, they could scarcely be said to be of the character of a Divine Revelation; they were truths which had their foundation in the innate moral consciousness of mankind, who might have reached them, and had in a manner reached them, without any external aid or re-statement. They left the Old Testament and the better part of the New, moreover, wholly unexplained.

And as time went on, I became increasingly conscious that this state of things could not possibly continue. It was a course diametrically opposed to the dictates of my conscience and to the normal tendencies of my character. I felt that I was in an entirely false position, which could not for a moment be tolerated by honest men in any other sphere of human life and interest. I therefore determined to face the matter boldly with God's help, and not to rest until I had cleared my mind and knew where and what I was. Not infrequently the thought came into my mind to seek further advice and to take counsel with some really conscientious and devout clergyman. But had I not done this already? I had put myself in personal communication with the best and most scholarly minds of the present day; I

had taken the utmost pains to ascertain what they really held respecting the doctrine of the Anglican Church. I had not only studied their works and attended their lectures, but I had heard their ideas and views from their own lips, and thoroughly satisfied myself as to the actual state of things. What additional benefit could I gain by seeking further advice from men who, in all probability, were not so well instructed, and whose judgment was consequently of very little value? I knew that my perplexity was not due to some misconception, or to the fact that I had omitted to take cognizance of some important historic fact or truth, but to that general inconsistency and want of logic which I instinctively felt to underlie the entire Anglican system of thought. I had an intuitive conviction that there was a flaw in the argument upon which the National Church based its claims, and that that flaw destroyed the claim altogether.

At this time my attention was directed to a book written by a man of scholarly mind and attainment who had also passed through a similar fight of faith, and who had ultimately joined the Roman Catholic Church. The book interested me intensely, because it seemed to express and formulate difficulties which were altogether my own, although, of course, their solution did not as yet commend itself to my mind in any forcible way. But I was beginning to feel that it might

become my duty to discontinue my work in the Anglican Church, seeing that I had no confidence whatever in its doctrinal system, and that, in a sense, I held some distinctly Roman Catholic doctrines. This was, of course, a very serious step to take, and it occurred to me, that before forming any decision, I might get considerable help by ascertaining how the matter presented itself to a Catholic mind which had passed through the same conflict and had worked its way through similar, if not greater, moral and intellectual difficulties.

I wrote to the author of the book, explaining as far as I could, the state of my mind and asking his advice respecting my proposed course of action. The following formed the substance of my letter :—

"I am not satisfied with myself—not clear in my mind respecting my own inmost convictions, and consequently my duty towards myself and my people.

"I cannot close my eyes to the fact, that the vague feeling of uncertainty, produced without doubt by the hesitating and uncertain voice of the Church, is leading numbers of thoughtful persons to religious indifference, sometimes into entire unbelief. I cannot resist the impression forcing itself increasingly upon my mind, that it is becoming more and more difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish amidst conflicting doctrines, the clear light of Revealed Truth.

"In my present comparatively independent position as a religious teacher, practically responsible to God and my own conscience only, my task is one of extreme difficulty, and is causing me no end of trouble and perplexity.

"I have for some considerable time past carefully, and I think I may say prayerfully, considered the whole question, and sought for light and help from almost every quarter; but the subject is an exceedingly complex one. There are, moreover, a thousand influences at work calculated to bias the judgment and to influence the will. I am anxious to do my duty in accordance with my best and highest convictions and to proclaim God's Truth—not my own personal views and opinions. But where and what is God's Truth?

"Is the Church of England the true Catholic Church in this land, and is the present condition of things a necessary and perhaps only temporary evil consequent upon a great religious reaction; is it therefore my duty to remain at my post and to work steadily with a view of helping to strengthen her foundations and setting forth her principles?

"Or is the Church of England really a schismatic body with no claim to historic and Catholic continuity, and presenting a one-sided and mutilated Christianity? is her case hopeless by reason of the untenableness of her claims, and am I acting in the highest interests of Truth

by leaving her communion and urging my friends to follow my example?

"These two questions are incessantly before my mind, and so far I have not been able to clearly answer the one or the other.

"I feel, of course, that in seeking a solution of these difficult problems, other and personal considerations enter in, and these may possibly go to obscure the judgment and to modify the force of definite convictions. It has therefore occurred to me, that it might be my duty to give up, for a time at least, my clerical and distinctly teaching work and to seek some other occupation. I need scarcely say that I have a deep sense of the responsibility which a step such as I am indicating would involve. But it seems to me that it offers the only possible escape from an exceedingly perplexing position, and certainly the means of freeing my heart and mind from those influences which the normal exercise of my office is bound continually to call into action.

"I fear that I have very imperfectly stated my case; it is so difficult to say exactly what is in one's mind. I know, of course, what you are likely to say in reply to the two questions in which I have summed up my intellectual difficulties. But I gathered from your book that you had thought much and deeply on these great matters, and I am anxious to know something of the processes of thought by which you have reached your

conclusions. What do you think of my plan? What do you advise me to read? What is my present duty?" &c., &c.

The answer which I received to this letter was as follows:—

"I have read and re-read your letter with the deepest sympathy and will say what I can, always premising what you know I must say, that if you are honest, as I am sure you are, in your investigations, they can have only one end, and that before that end comes you should consult a priest, and not a layman like myself. I will ask Father ——, a very learned Benedictine, who is most able and sympathetic with inquirers; or if you were coming up to London I would entreat you to see and lay your difficulties before a Jesuit friend of mine, Father ——, who would do more for you than I possibly can.

"When I say that there is only one end to your doubts and inquiries, I do not mean that there are not many men in the Church of England, both ministers and laymen, who are in perfectly good faith, honest and sincere, as I am sure you have been and are. But to most of such the doubt of their position has never come; and when it does come, investigation in a logical mind must bring with it a certainty that the Church of England has no true standing ground.

"There has been much controversy on Anglican

Orders; but to my mind the discussion is empty and idle. For myself it seems extremely doubtful whether Barlow was a Bishop, and whether the Anglican Church has any transmission of Orders. But supposing those who professed to consecrate Bishops were themselves Bishops, what avail Orders to men in schism? *Authority* is the main question—'Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia,' and nowhere else. I do not think it is possible to put the matter better than in your words taken out of their interrogative form. The Church of England is a distinctly schismatical body, with no claim of historic or Catholic continuity, presenting a one-sided and mutilated Christianity. The Church of England has no sound doctrine on the Incarnation, consequently no sound doctrine on the Blessed Eucharist; it has deprived the Christians of England of five sacraments; it has destroyed the Communion of Saints by forbidding the Invocation of Saints. I may, according to the Church of England, ask the prayers of my friend, a sinful man, up to the very moment of his death, but if I have a well-grounded belief that he is in Heaven, where he sees and hears all things in the heart of God, I may, forsooth, not ask his prayers any more!

"You have got on the path of inquiry and inquire you must, or be unfaithful to the calling of God. Of course I think, as I said before, there is only one logical end, but if, when you have inquired, you in all good faith

think it necessary to stay where you are, none has any right to blame you, certainly not I.

"You ask what books to read. Of course you know an old book, Milner's *End of Controversy*. There is no better book. But in regard to special questions which present difficulties to you, I cannot advise unless I know what those difficulties are. And now as to your further question, what should be done while you are making up your mind. My own opinion is very clear. Stay where you are, doing your duty, till your mind is made up. 'A thousand difficulties,' says Cardinal Newman, 'do not make one doubt,' and I would go further and say 'A thousand doubts do not make one certainty.'

"When the time comes that you must accept the Catholic Church, if that time comes, there is one only thing to do, whatever be the consequences. But till then you are not called on to teach what she repudiates. All that is in the Prayer Book she also teaches, only much more. If you have doubt whether you are a priest, and in your communion service are offering a valid sacrifice, you need have no doubt that you are celebrating a pious memorial of our Lord's death till you see clearly a more excellent way. Till that way is clear I think men must be content to go on, as Newman again says, 'teaching with the stammering lips of ambiguous formularies,' and possess your soul in patience till the full light comes. I am sure, as a rule, that if a man, for conscience'

sake, leave any position, he must go as Abraham went, 'Et exiit nesciens quo iret.' God, as a rule, also guides his steps."

This letter, which seemed to me to breathe a spirit of sincere loyalty to Truth, while displaying a high degree of sound common sense, was a real help to me. I naturally seized with joy upon the thought that, in the opinion of a man of mature scholarship and sincere piety, my scruples need involve no immediate change in my position. So far, certainly, the time for decisive action had not yet come. Nevertheless, one thought so emphatically expressed in this letter was constantly present to my mind, "When doubt does come, investigation in a logical mind must bring with it certainty that the Church of England has no true standing ground." I could scarcely claim as yet to have concluded my investigation, having so far confined myself to a study of the Anglican position, and having only incidentally examined distinctly Roman doctrine, and yet that certainty referred to had practically already come. It was therefore clearly my duty now to make a careful and conscientious examination of the doctrinal system of the Roman Church and thus ascertain, in a definite and practical way, how far I dissented from her teaching and what amount of doctrine my own independent researches had led me to accept. I well remember my

feelings when I was thus brought a step further on my search after Truth and when I fully realized how far I had really got now. I have to confess that there were moments when my spirit revealed to me the result of my inquiry and when I shrank from my self-imposed task. Had it really come to this? Was the magic charm of that wondrous institution, which had ensnared so many before me, ensnaring my own soul also? Was Rome luring me on with her seductive smile? Should I awaken some day from my troubled dream and discover, that I had been deluded and that some evil influence had implanted a fatal poison into my mental constitution? What would my friends think; what would my people say if they knew that I was seriously examining the claims of the Roman Church, knowing as I did, that such an examination might involve my joining her communion?

But it was clearly a matter of ordinary honesty and common sense. The most enlightened and most saintly men and women of every age had been Catholics, and many in this present age were at great personal sacrifice joining the Roman Communion. One thing was certain: no mere emotion or sentiment were directing my course. The love of Truth, and a burning desire to possess it, lay at the root of my present difficulty, and intellects infinitely better and more cultivated than my own, had felt the same difficulty and had had to face the same

duty. Reflections such as these incessantly passed through my mind; they were dictated, no doubt, by that extraordinary and irrational antipathy to Rome which the normal conditions of life and the very air we breathe seem to kindle within us. They were kept in check, it is true, by the dictates of common sense and by an increasing consciousness of higher forces and influences at work in my soul. But oh! the bitterness and fierceness of the conflict, the severity of the struggle between the force of Truth and the natural and inherited tendencies of the mind! My heart goes out in deep sympathy towards those who have trodden and who are perhaps at this time treading this hard and thorny path, and my prayer is that Divine strength may be given them for the conflict. It is a matter of standing alone, sometimes quite alone. When the critical time comes, the dearest friends seek refuge in the apparent safety of numbers and in the accepted "common-sense" views of the multitude. They shrug their shoulders in pious contempt at our perverseness and our foolish craving. And at every step of the journey we stand in need of Him who has trodden the steep path before us, and from Whom we know that it is with every loyal soul a case of "after much tribulation into the Kingdom of Heaven." But how many stumble and fall by the wayside, weary of their burden and exhausted by the fierceness of the fight: how many let go of that Divine hand so gently

guiding and directing their steps, and in the end return to that dreary barren land where they will never succeed in quenching their spiritual thirst or in finding a resting-place for their troubled and storm-tossed souls. It is not possible thus to silence that still small voice of Truth in the heart, or to discover amongst things purely secular and human the peace of God which passes understanding. The Spirit of Truth may depart from a disloyal soul; but He cannot leave that soul as He found it. Traces of His presence will remain while life lasts, and these will again and again awaken the accusing voice of conscience. The passing and immediate interests of life may wipe out many of the more vivid impressions, but there will ever remain the aching void, the sense of a great and irretrievable loss. "I have called and ye have refused. I have stretched out My hand and no man regarded." "If thou hadst but known in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace: but now are they hid from thine eyes."

After a pause of some weeks and an effort to analyze the actual state of my mind and to gauge the force of my convictions, I addressed the following letter to my Catholic friend:—

"You say that, having once entered upon the path of inquiry, you have no manner of doubt as to the way in which my difficulties will terminate. I must openly

confess that similar impressions have recently passed over my mind, and that I have experienced keen anxiety lest I should be resisting the promptings of the Spirit of God. The question which presents itself to my mind with greatest urgency is: When and with what measure of knowledge does it become my plain duty to leave the Anglican Communion? I have now weighed and studied the whole question for a very considerable time, and I feel that I have reached what I may term a point of stagnation—a decidedly unsatisfactory state of mind and heart. . . .

"Speaking generally, I cannot say that any one of the distinctly Roman Catholic Doctrines, as they are set forth in authorized formularies of the Roman Catholic Church, present any insuperable intellectual difficulty to me. I have not examined them very carefully as yet, but I feel that if I cannot embrace some of them wholeheartedly, they can probably all be shown to have a sound historic and rational basis from the standpoint of the Rule of Faith of the Catholic Church. I am inclined to think that they are better calculated to meet the wants and yearnings of the human heart than, to use a mild term, the hesitating doctrinal statements of the Anglican Church. It seems to me that Christianity is nothing at all unless it is a clear and definite statement of Truth, calculated to *terminate* doubt and uncertainty—in essential points at least—not to *create* them. . . .

"Respecting the controversy on the validity of Anglican Orders, the question, broadly considered, seems to me to be as follows: Admitting the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist and the need of a valid priesthood, in what spirit and to what function are the Anglican clergy ordained? I must confess that I cannot escape the conclusion, that they are *not* ordained to offer the Christian Sacrifice, and that therefore, in the real and true sense of the term, they are not priests.

"With regard to the supremacy of the Roman See, I cannot say that I am intellectually quite clear. I have practically accepted the principle on what I may term *a priori* or lower grounds—the need of order and of a central authority, a final court of appeal in matters of doctrine and the government of the Church. But I have no specific knowledge on the subject, and should feel obliged to you if you would name some sound book dealing with it both from the historical and theological standpoint. It seems to me that I have to decide between two positions: (1) Is the Papal authority at its root a result of circumstances; or (2) is it part of Divine Revelation and an instance of the legitimate and necessary development of doctrine?

"I had read portions of Milner's *End of Controversy*, and am reading the book again now. I have also read several of the controversial publications of the Catholic Truth Society. Cardinal Manning's little books, too,

and especially his *Religio Viatoris* and *A Letter to Dr. Pusey*, have helped me to understand better the Catholic position.

"And now with regard to my present position and my present duty. I am deeply grateful to you for the advice given, and I am more than glad to think that you consider such a position tenable—for the present at least. I have, in the midst of my heart-searchings, found comfort in the thought that the extent of my knowledge is the measure of my responsibility, and it is quite certain that if I have keenly felt the difficulty of my position and the claims of the Roman Catholic Church, I have not so far arrived at a final conviction—at a point where the ways must, of necessity, part. My only fear is that in my weakness I shall be tempted to make too much of this 'way of escape' out of a great difficulty, and that I may thus, by my own action, obscure the higher light and become less fit to distinguish the voice of God speaking in my heart.

"I frankly admit that severance from the Anglican Church and ministry would, in my case, mean a very great sacrifice from which I shrink, not on my own account, but on that of those I love, and for whose happiness and welfare I am largely responsible. And it would, I feel, be difficult to say how far this lower but immediate and urgent question goes to modify the judgment as to the real strength of convictions forcing

themselves upon the mind. It is on these grounds that I came to entertain the idea of giving up my ministerial work, for a time at least, in order to remove from my life influences and claims which might go to hinder the clear discernment of Truth."

I also addressed a letter to a Catholic priest whom I had known intimately and personally for a number of years, and in whose sound judgment and piety I had every confidence. I had consulted the highest Anglican authorities, and they had failed to satisfy me; it seemed to me only right and reasonable now to take counsel with Catholics and to ascertain how the matter presented itself from their point of view. Father —— was himself a convert to the Catholic Church, and I was anxious to know what his own specific difficulties had been. Of course I was entirely free from that insane popular prejudice against the Roman Catholic clergy which sees in every priest a crafty and unprincipled proselytiser from whose clutches a perplexed mind has little, if any, chance of escape. I had known Father —— for a period of at least ten years; we had exchanged visits and letters from time to time, and had had many interesting conversations on Religion and doctrinal subjects, and never, throughout the whole of these ten years had he spoken one word to me as to the advisability of my joining the Catholic Church. I had always been impressed with his simple and natural piety, and had

felt, that there was about him that which somehow is entirely absent from the Anglican clergy. I could never quite make up my mind in what this distinguishing characteristic precisely consisted; but it was a thing that could be distinctly felt, and was felt by others who came in contact with him: a certain air of calmness and certainty underlying and pervading every thought and action and apparently dominating the entire moral and intellectual life.

I wrote to Father —— stating my position very fully and explicitly, and asking him to tell me on what grounds he had severed his own connection with the Anglican Church.

He replied as follows :—

"My own past helps me to understand your position, although my way was not quite the same, but more this: the Anglican Church taught me the Bible, and the Bible led me to the Catholic Church. The Anglican Church, or at least leading Anglicans, put Church History before me, and then, like you, in Church History (even written by an Anglican) I saw the Catholic Church.

"Certainly your position is made more difficult by having others dependent on you; still that is a secondary matter, is it not? and the first is to follow the Truth, to please God and save one's soul, and so to help other souls too.

"You ask me what I should advise. First, of course, I should advise constant prayer for light to know the Truth and strength to follow it. And then to consider the Catholic position dispassionately, and as though you were acting for a third person; to say to yourself, what should I recommend so-and-so to do in a similar position? If the Church seems to be right in the abstract, but not in some points to you personally, is not that either because you do not know her real doctrine and practice, or because you are wrong and the Church is right?

"It takes long to write things which might be better explained in a few moments by word of mouth. When do you pass through London? Could you come here then? or we might meet in town. Or you might go and see the Fathers at ——; the Monastery is well worth seeing. There is no need of an introduction; but if you wish, I would gladly send one.

"I do not wonder that you are dissatisfied with the various opinions in the Anglican Church. Clearly, if we are to be condemned for not believing ("he that believeth not shall be condemned"), there must be clear grounds for believing, and these we find in the unity of the Catholic Church; its unceasing life throughout the centuries, in persecution and prosperity; its union now of men of all nations and degrees; the holiness of its Saints, who are peculiar to the Catholic Church; the

beauty of its doctrine; its descent from the Apostles (no man can find a beginning for the Church except in the Apostles). Consider the ceaseless attacks made on it; its survival and even the evil lives of some of its children, testify to its vital power, which survives this and provides means of reformation. The lies which are told against the Church witness for it.

"Consider the wonderful mass of theology harmoniously compiled by the Church; and besides, the benefits it has brought men even in the natural order—education, freedom from slavery, the Sunday rest, countless works of mercy for sick, aged, orphans, imbecile, and other things which will occur to yourself.

"The unity of the Church is, of course, a most striking proof, and this was given by Jesus Christ Himself as a mark of His Church, 'that they may be made perfect in one, and the world may know that Thou hast sent me' (S. John xvii. 23).

"I shall look forward to another letter, telling me your difficulties, unless you can manage to visit —— conveniently. In any case, though, you will write to me, I am sure."

In a subsequent letter he says:—

"In your thoughts, do try to put temporal affairs out of the question; it is now time to remember the pearl of great price, which is worth all that a man has,

though I know that it is others, not self, that you are considering.

"As to your friend ——, I should say that your action shows that you feel that the Roman Catholic Church offers the strongest proof.

"I enclose a little book of definite teaching (the Penny Catechism) which you may know; in any case, you will not despise it for its simple form.

"I am praying for you daily."

The opinion expressed in this letter respecting my action in regard to a friend, has reference to a gentleman with whom I came in contact at ——, and who disclosed to me his own religious perplexities. He had, after an active and honoured career and a life of sincere religious conviction, suffered an entire eclipse of faith, and had lost himself in the maze of scientific and agnostic speculation. His true and deeper instincts, however, were incessantly asserting themselves in contradiction to the conclusions of his intellect and causing a most distressing inward conflict of antagonistic forces. He came to tell me his story and to ask my advice. I urged him very strongly to join the Roman Catholic Church, this advice causing him the greatest possible astonishment. But I expressed this opinion on the ground of my best and highest conviction. My friend had already suffered much, and was seeking rest for his soul in some clearly revealed Truth. I trembled at the very

thought of his joining the Anglican Communion and of finding himself face to face with its conflicting creeds and doctrines. I felt that a thoughtful and sensitive mind like his, could not fail to take in the situation as it really was, and was almost certain to suffer a second and perhaps irretrievable shipwreck of faith. It would with him be a case of falling from the frying-pan into the fire. And with the convictions then forming in my mind, I could not honestly counsel him to expose himself to such a risk. I was certain that he would be safer and in every way better off in the Roman Catholic Church.

But this advice brought me to my senses. Was a greater anomaly conceivable? The minister of a Protestant Communion urging a distressed soul to seek refuge in the Roman Catholic Church! And yet I felt that in giving this advice I was acting in accordance with the dictates of both my reason and my conscience. But it was clear that a crisis could not be far off, since matters could not possibly remain as they were. If, in giving this advice, I was loyal to my conscience, I was certainly disloyal to the teaching of my Church, from whatever standpoint I might be disposed to regard it. It clearly became my duty, therefore, to look matters in the face and to ascertain in what position I really stood with respect to Rome; how much of her doctrine I believed and how much I rejected.

About this time I received an answer to my second letter addressed to my Catholic lay friend, the substance of which I have given on pp. 204–208. He wrote :—

"The one pressing and important question in your letter is : 'When and with what measure of knowledge does it become my plain duty to leave the Anglican Communion?' I should say not until your doubts have become absolute certainties and you are wholly convinced in your mind and judgment, not only that the claims of the Church of England are false, but that those of the Church of Rome are true.

"You remember that S. Peter said to our Lord, 'To whom shall we go? *Thou* hast the words of eternal life.' When you are constrained to say that to our Mother, the Church of Rome, then and then only need you go out from your present position. But then it is clear that you must. I do not think the ultimate question is of the validity of Anglican Orders, but of the Supremacy of Peter. It is quite possible that the Reformation Bishops, Barlow and others, were Bishops and therefore transmitted Orders. I suppose no doubt has ever existed that the Eastern Church has valid Orders, but her position is most unsatisfactory and equivocal, because she is in schism. Luke Rivington has published a book on *Authority*, and Cardinal Vaughan an Essay on S. Peter which may be worth your looking at.

"But, after all, I think these are academical questions, and that the vital questions are far other. I think the practical test to you will eventually be as follows: You say you accept, or nearly accept, all Roman doctrine. Now take the doctrine of the Sacrament of Penance. When you thoroughly realize this, you will feel that you who communicate in celebrating at least weekly, probably much more often, ought to go to Confession at least fortnightly. I do not suppose that you do, since Confession has dropped into almost entire neglect. But you will realize that you ought when once you understand what Penance is.

"Now, where would you go? I venture to say there is not a parson in —— to whom you would care to go. And if you did they would not understand you. They would exaggerate your scruples, and never distinguish between what is a sin, and a temptation which is no sin, for they have no training. Can that be a true Church which does not instruct the clergy in the administration of a Sacrament?

"Again, when you thoroughly understand the doctrine of the Real Presence, you will feel how different is your own Church with its bare altar, and the smallest Church with its Tabernacle enshrining our Lord. Of the Protestant Churches it may be said, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him,'" &c.

With the general ideas expressed in this letter I found myself in entire agreement. I had already, in my last curacy, been struck with the unscriptural character, to call it by no other name, of the Anglican method of administering Holy Communion. I had already then become convinced, that the Apostle's clear and pointed injunction to guard against an unworthy reception was most deliberately ignored and lost sight of in the Church of England. And, considering human weakness, how could a worthy reception be secured except by a definite act of confession and a searching examination in the presence of a duly constituted spiritual authority? Respecting the latter portion of the letter, I was in a position to apply Mary Magdalene's words to myself in a most direct and literal sense: respecting the Sacramental Presence of Christ in His Church, I, too, could say from the heart, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." It was certain that the state of mental and moral confusion and uncertainty in which I now found myself could not possibly continue. My entire religious life was becoming disorganized, and the severity of the conflict incessantly going on in my mind was beginning to undermine my health. It was my duty to take counsel with myself and to ascertain in a clear and definite way what I really believed and what I doubted; how far such doubts were due to deliberate conviction based on specific

knowledge ; how far they were due to mere feelings and personal prejudices. In my friend's opinion, it became my duty to leave the Anglican Church only when my doubts had become absolute certainties, and until I was wholly convinced in my mind and judgment, not only that the claims of the Church of England were false, but that those of the Church of Rome were true. This was good and sound advice which any mind, Catholic or non-Catholic, provided it was honest, was bound to give. And beyond this point no one could really help me. It was for myself to determine clearly and fully how far I rejected the claims of the Anglican Church and doctrine, and how far I accepted those of the Church of Rome. The issue of this self-analysis would of necessity determine my future course.

Now, it would only be wearisome to the reader were I to enter upon a re-statement of my doctrinal position from what I may term the negative, *i.e.*, the Anglican standpoint. I have, in the course of the preceding narrative, pointed out when and on what grounds I found myself constrained to reject certain doctrines of Protestantism and to accept Catholic principles ; and I am anxious not to divorce the statement of my final convictions and conclusions from the record of the circumstances and events which were instrumental in creating them. In a matter of this kind it is impossible to adhere to a strictly systematic treatment. There is

no system in the gradual perception of Divine Truth, and it is under any circumstances a difficult thing to say accurately what the mind, at any given time, accepts and what it rejects. Truths which, on a certain line of reasoning, appear clear and incontrovertible to-day, are, from a different process of thought, not quite so clear and certain to-morrow, and call for further study and examination. Some are only perceived in outline and without any clear apprehension of the relation in which they stand to other truths. Some are negative in their character, being perceived by the mind as a necessary result of the rejection of erroneous beliefs and ideas. In many instances there is an assent of the intellect only, the moral nature only gradually appropriating the Truth.

But in order to appreciate clearly that there was in my case no possibility of standing still, but that a "divine necessity was laid upon me," two points must be kept clearly in view. And these two points practically summarize my position as it was from the negative point of view.

1. With me the Protestant Theory had entirely and hopelessly broken down. I was wholly and finally convinced, that the Protestant principle, if honestly and consistently applied, was destructive of all definite belief and to Christianity itself as a Divine Revelation. It was, in my opinion, responsible for the disorganized condition of modern Christendom and for the loss of

Faith in this and other countries. I knew from personal experience, that the principle was spiritually demoralizing, and that upon it no healthful spiritual life could be built up.

2. With the doctrine of private judgment I had rejected that of the supremacy of Holy Scripture, believing it to be wholly untenable, on intellectual as well as historical grounds. For similar reasons, I had given up the idea of the Invisible Church, and the Protestant notion of the meaning and character of the two Sacraments. I was absolutely certain, that entire rejection of Christianity would be easier for me than acceptance of these Protestant principles. My mind, on the other hand, had almost imperceptibly found its way to what turned out to be Catholic Truth. My entire conception of Christianity had gradually undergone a radical change. I accepted the doctrine of the Visible Church with a central governing authority. I believed in Apostolic Succession as a guarantee of valid orders and a valid priesthood qualified to minister valid Sacraments. I was intellectually convinced, that the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Eucharist was the best and fullest expression of the statements of Holy Scripture and most unquestionably the belief of the Early Church.

I held distinctly Catholic views on Holy Baptism. I believed in the efficacy of Prayers for the Dead, in the Invocation of Saints, in the expediency of careful self-

examination and Confession previous to the reception of Holy Communion. I was favourably disposed, on the grounds of reason, towards the doctrine of Purgatory. But, and here was after all the very heart and centre of the difficulty, I was equally convinced that these doctrines had no place in the Anglican Church, and that I could not honestly teach them with Anglican formularies. I had no manner of doubt that some of them were emphatically repudiated by the plain language of the Articles. The modern Anglican claim to historic continuity and Apostolic Succession appeared to me grotesque and childish in the face of the incontrovertible facts of history. My entire attitude towards the Roman Catholic Church therefore had in a certain sense, and very naturally, become a favourable one. I had a vague sense that from the standpoint of the Roman Catholic Rule of Faith it might not be difficult to intellectually defend all distinctly Roman doctrine. I was pretty well convinced, moreover, that the Catholic and Sacramental system was best calculated to satisfy the moral and spiritual needs of mankind, and that on its principles alone the claim of Christianity to be a light and life-bringing Revelation could be most reasonably maintained. Adopting then the expression of my Catholic friend, I was clearly convinced in my mind and judgment that the claims of the Church

of England were false. It only remained for me to ascertain whether those of the Church of Rome were true.

It will surely be admitted by all reasonable men, that I was now most amply justified in examining more carefully the claims of a Church in which I had, by an entirely independent method of thought and in spite of a pronounced educational bias, discovered so much truth—to which I had been drawn by the inferences of both my reason and my conscience. And if I ultimately accepted all that Church's doctrine, and submitted myself to her heart and soul, it cannot surely be said that in doing this I was guided by mere sentiment or feeling, or that the desire for mental rest threw me into the arms of Rome's rigid dogmatic system. I can but state it as the simple fact that the very opposite was my case. My temperament and character would not have admitted of such a process. I should never have found it possible to accept a truth to which both my heart and my mind did not fully and unhesitatingly assent. I should have paused at the last moment had there remained a doubt or misgiving in my heart. I have taken no leaps in my journey of faith. I have jumped to no conclusion or, at any point of my inquiry, parted with my judgment and my common sense. I have taken one step at a time, again and again verifying conclusions at which I had arrived or

convictions I had gained, and I have never at any moment lost sight of any argument that could in reason be urged against the opinion I had ultimately formed. It is true that moral conviction and religious faith are not the outcome of intellectual research and historical investigation ; the intellect can after all only lead to the door of the sanctuary ; it has no power to unlock the door and to accomplish an entrance ; but it is surely bound to clear away difficulties, and, by exercising itself to its utmost power and capacity, to prepare the way of the Lord. Having due regard to the religious conditions into which most of us are unhappily born, it is difficult to see how this is to be avoided—in the case of the larger number of us at least.

And in my examination of distinctly Roman Catholic doctrine I have never, strange to say, had a moment's difficulty with respect to the question of the validity of Anglican Orders which is agitating so many minds at this present time. I have never been able to treat the matter from any but the common-sense point of view. It has always seemed perfectly clear to me that if the Roman Catholic conception of Christianity be the true one, if there be a Priesthood and a Sacrifice in the Church, an appeal to the facts of history must of necessity terminate the controversy and decide against Anglican Orders. It is a question of ordinary

common sense. In what intelligent sense can the men who are committed to the teaching that "the sacrifices of masses were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits" be the valid successors of that long line of priestly men who taught the doctrine of the Great Christian Sacrifice and who looked upon the celebration of the Mass as the central act of Christian worship? How came such a claim ever to be seriously entertained; on what logical principle can it be said to be based? Granting the truth of the Catholic doctrine, how could those be its guardians who have pledged themselves to subvert and destroy it? The Anglican Ordinal does not say a word about the Christian Sacrifice, and does not profess to convey any authority or power with a view to its celebration. And how can the belief of some Anglican ministers in the sacerdotal character of the Priesthood transform them into the successors of the validly because "sacerdotally" consecrated clergy of the Pre-Reformation Church? Both fact and history surely testify that they are separated from them by a wide and impassable gulf, and that the difference is not one of degree but of kind. The Anglican minister is a Protestant or he is nothing at all; and if a Protestant he is separated from the entire spirit of the Catholic Church and Priesthood. Or is the wolf to be tolerated as a shepherd of the flock; is the care of the sheep to be committed to him? Has the

destroyer of the Faith, preaching another gospel, a place equal to that of its defender in the household of God? Are there resting upon him too the divinely visible marks of a valid consecration?

It is surely not merely a question of not opposing a certain truth; but it is a question of definitely teaching it, of being purposely and authoritatively sent and consecrated to celebrate the rites and to use the words which express it and illustrate it. What institution or society would tolerate the presence of an officer who could not conscientiously defend and proclaim its aims and principles and who had not been authoritatively appointed? What ambassador would find acceptance with a foreign court or people, who had neither been validly sent, nor was in sympathy with the purpose of his mission: who came simply because he believed in the necessity and usefulness of the ambassador's office? It has always seemed to me that a single reference to history and an application of the most ordinary common sense are really more than sufficient to demonstrate the absurdity of the modern Anglican claim and to destroy it.

But there can be little doubt that fair and unprejudiced examination of Catholic doctrine on the part of the Protestant mind, is most certainly a very difficult task for the simple reason that the mind, from a long continued habit of thought, constantly and unconsciously

falls back upon the Protestant Rule of Faith, and views the subject under consideration from that limited and one-sided standpoint. It is the normal tendency of the Protestant mind to refer all things back to Holy Scripture, and a kind of moral shock and a vague feeling of distrust are invariably experienced, when a truth is proposed which has a strange look about it, and which is to all appearance without Scriptural foundation. It is so difficult to keep the Catholic Rule of Faith steadily and clearly in view, and to realize continually that it is not a question of written documents and statements, but a question of a living authority gradually disclosing itself within a living and duly constituted Body. Happy, of course, are those who, early in the course of their inquiry, discover that keynote and corner-stone of Catholic Truth which is its distinguishing characteristic, and which separates it from every other religion and from every Christian sect: who recognize that there is a Divine Teacher in the world and in the Church, who speaks with Divine authority, and whose voice is heard and obeyed in every part of the globe. To such persons the greater part of the difficulty has practically disappeared They satisfy their minds on that one doctrine, and submit their intellect to the Divine Teacher who must know better than themselves. Such a submission, it is true, is still spoken of by the world as a mental and moral suicide, although it may be doubted whether it

is not the highest and most legitimate exercise of the supernaturally enlightened intellect.

But experience teaches that this is seldom the method of conversion with the larger number of unsettled Protestants. They generally find their way to the Truth gradually, and by passing from point to point in their inquiry, examining one doctrine after the other; many of them alas! in the end rejecting the whole because some unfamiliar-sounding statement, which has apparently no foundation in Holy Scripture, presents an insuperable difficulty to the mind. I would most earnestly entreat such persons to at once seek help and guidance from some Catholic authority, not to trust the unaided conclusions of the individual judgment. All really thoughtful persons, who have given some time and study to the matter, know perfectly well that the accepted views of Catholic doctrine rest, for the most part, upon an incomprehensible misconception and misinterpretation, and that the entire method of Protestant controversy is highly calculated to prejudice the mind and to render it incapable of forming an impartial judgment. It requires years sometimes to wholly eliminate a fatal early bias of this character. It is an undeniable fact, that the popular objections to the doctrines of the Catholic Church which pass muster even amongst men of enlightened mind, are really due to ignorance of these doctrines, and lose

their force and meaning when they are fairly examined and analyzed. This is being strikingly illustrated by the Catholic movement which is now going on in our midst. I can assert without hesitation, that I have never, throughout the whole course of my Anglican life, met with a single clergyman who had an accurate knowledge of Catholic doctrine and who did not, when speaking of Catholicism either privately or in public, set forth a mere caricature of it. It is most lamentable to think, that men of honour and of education will make statements respecting the greatest and most powerful Christian Communion (to which in any case they owe their own clerical position), which have absolutely no foundation in fact, which they have never taken the trouble to verify, and which reference to the Penny Catechism or the most elementary handbook on Catholic doctrine and practice would suffice to contradict and to disprove.

But there are, I think, unmistakable signs of a coming reaction. The most ardent Protestants are beginning to realize that the thing is practically played out, and that if they are to retain any kind of hold upon the intelligent portion of the English people, they will have to resort to other and different means. The attitude of Catholics in England, their fervour and whole-hearted devotion, their purity and simplicity of life, are evidences which appeal strongly to the English character, and these

will be largely instrumental in effecting an entire change in the attitude of the public mind. Really spiritually-minded people, moreover, are becoming tired of a merely negative Creed upon which they cannot nourish their souls or build up their spiritual life; they are tired to death of that Protestant bombast which exhibits itself in reviews and magazines and is applauded by the ignorant or partially instructed. They are reading and thinking for themselves, and are beginning to entertain more than a suspicion, that it is a mere strife of words and that there is no spiritual force or superiority of doctrine behind those loud and arrogant assertions. They are yearning for that calmness and that restfulness of a settled positive faith which they know Catholics to possess. How much longer, indeed, will it be possible to denounce as a system of gross superstition that great Church to which the best intellects of every age have yielded whole-hearted allegiance, and which in this present time counts amongst its devoted adherents some of the brightest lights in every sphere of human thought and research?

Now I am not writing a Handbook of Catholic Theology, and I have therefore no intention of adducing the grounds on which I accepted certain distinctly Roman Catholic doctrines. I would refer those who desire to know more of these grounds to the recog-

nized books set forth by Catholic authority, such as *Instructions in Christian Doctrine*, or Moehler's *Symbolism, or Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences between Catholics and Protestants.* But, apart from the distinctly theological aspect of the matter, I should like to point out, that there is most certainly a distinctly rational element underlying all Catholic doctrine, and that many truths held by the Catholic Church are really based upon postulates of our natural reason and the intuitive perceptions of our moral nature. I must confess, that this element appealed to me very strongly as soon as I really understood Catholic doctrine, and I feel confident that this will be found to be the case with all those who are serious enough to work their way through the mass of popular misconception and misstatement to a clear understanding of what the Church really believes and teaches.

Contrast, for instance, the Protestant notion of "the Church" with the Catholic doctrine as set forth in all authorized Catholic formularies. An English Protestant confesses that he believes in One Catholic and Apostolic Church; but he acknowledges at the same time that that Church is not visible to the eye of man: it is composed of those who are really and vitally joined by faith to the Saviour, and who may here on earth belong to any or to no Christian Church or organization. This notion, unscriptural and unhis-

torical as it ought to appear to the most superficial student of the New Testament, has the merit that it bridges over many difficulties and doctrinal differences and supports the popular claim, that there is a spiritual union underlying and binding together all the outwardly separated bodies and congregations. But surely, as Cardinal Manning says, "this notion destroys itself." "How shall an invisible Church carry on the Revelation of God manifest in the flesh, or be the representative of the unseen God, the successor of visible Apostles, the minister of visible sacraments, the celebrator of visible councils, the administrator of visible laws, and the worshipper in visible sanctuaries? Here is another impossibility to which the strife of argument drives reasonable men."[1]

Where, moreover, is the ground of Christian certainty and assurance? How can the best of men ever be sure for a single moment that he is really a member of the true Body of Christ? He cannot reach the invisible so as to satisfy his heart; he has no means of making his calling and election sure; he must be content in life and in death to rest in mere pious feeling, based upon a vague and shadowy hope. And this destroys the very claim of the Christian Religion to bring divine peace to the human heart. A single reference, moreover, to the records of Holy Scripture would seem to

[1] *The Grounds of Faith*, p. 64.

banish the illusion. Our Lord Himself, speaking of evil-doers who, after one or two appeals, persist in their wrong-doing, lays down the following instruction: "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (S. Matt. xviii. 17). And if the real Church having authority is invisible, how is it to make itself authoritatively heard; in what sense can the evil-doer be said to hear its voice? It cannot be claimed that its decisions are made known through the mediumship of the visible portion of the Church, since, on the Protestant principle, no man can be sure whether its recognized mouthpieces are themselves members of the true Church or not. The want of logic which characterizes the entire fabric of Protestantism is indeed no less apparent in its separate parts, and well writes Dr. Döllinger in one of his later books:—

"The more distracted and forlorn the actual condition of a Church, so much the more poetical and enthusiastic becomes the talk of unity and love in mysterious, undiscoverable regions where the invisible Church is said to be at home. The silent spirit band has, in sooth, neither hand nor foot; it speaks not, hears not; it gives forth neither doctrine nor discipline, nor the administration of ecclesiastical means of grace. All these being matters that may indeed be dispensed with, since not one of the

spirits knows anything of the other, nor can act upon another either for good or for evil." [1]

How different and more reasonable and intelligible by far is the Catholic Doctrine of "the Church": A visible Society of believing men and women existing and moving in the world yet not of it, constantly acting upon it, and by a thousand visible means and influences presenting the reality of Divine Truth to the soul; having a visible central authority, sacraments and institutions for effecting the sanctification of men, accompanying him and watching over his every step from the cradle to the grave; continuing its intercession for and interest in him beyond the grave; binding, as its Divine Master ordained, the life which is seen to the life which is not seen, securing to the troubled, restless human heart divine certainty and peace! How reasonable, how intelligent, how truly Scriptural and Apostolic is this conception, how entirely does it meet the burning needs of the human spirit! Can anything be more absurd and inconceivable than the very thought that He who became man for man in order to bring him divine certainty, to make outward things the pledge and means of conveying inward things, should have founded a Church amongst men which is invisible!

But it will now be asked, how did this definitely and

[1] *The Church and the Churches*, p. 40.

decidedly Romewards drift of my mind, harmonize with my work and duties as an Anglican clergyman charged with distinct duties and responsibilities? I can only answer, that I had by this time ceased to make any effort to harmonize it and had lost all interest in my work. My duties were mechanically performed; my preaching consisted of mere moral platitudes. I felt that my Anglican career was fast drawing to its close, and that any hope of a different view of things, by further waiting and delay, was irretrievably gone. In any case I was absolutely certain that I could not continue in the Anglican ministry and at the same time retain my self-respect. Happily, circumstances, into which I need not here enter, facilitated an event which I had foreseen for some time and which had at length become inevitable, and, with the resignation of my incumbency, I practically terminated my official connection with the Church of England.

VI.

ALMOST PERSUADED.

BUT the end was not yet. If I had now recognized it as my bounden duty to sever my connection with the Church of England because I had ceased to believe her doctrines so far as they were ascertainable, I was not equally certain that the time had come for me to join the Roman Catholic Church. I examined the authorized Confession of Faith which converts to the Church are required to make previous to their reception, and I felt that there were certainly one or two points on which my mind was not perfectly clear. And I was determined, even at this time, to remain absolutely loyal to the principles which had hitherto guided me, and not to jump to conclusions. I would not accept one Catholic doctrine simply because I had found some other doctrine to be true and reasonable.

The doctrine on which doubt remained, or on which at least my mind was not perfectly clear, was the most important one of all—the doctrine of the Papal Infalli-

bility. I ought to state, however, that this mental reserve was chiefly due to the fact that I did not really understand the doctrine, never having made a careful and technical study of it. As will have been seen from the preceding chapters, I had no antecedent adverse feeling on the ground perhaps of its unreasonableness. On the contrary I had already, by a normal process of reflection, and by a whole-hearted acceptance of the principle of "development," arrived at a conception from which the doctrine was bound to be inferred by logical reasoning. To some extent, no doubt, my hesitation was due to that undefined feeling of antipathy against a dogma which the mind associates instinctively with popular abuse and ridicule, and whose name suggests a host of unfavourable and adverse reflections. My mind was further influenced, I am sure, by the remarkable fact that Dr. Döllinger, from whom I had learned so much, had himself rejected the Vatican Decree respecting the Pope's infallibility. Still, my hesitation was due to feelings and impressions, not to intellectual difficulties and objections resulting from full and specific knowledge.

I have since been told, that the certainly remarkable circumstance of Döllinger's rejection of the Vatican Decrees has not remained without its influence upon certain minds, and that it has, in several instances, been instrumental in keeping High Anglicans, who are on

the whole convinced of the truth of Catholic doctrine, from joining the Church. It is difficult for me to understand this attitude of mind, nor can I regard it as a justifiable one. Surely it is in our inquiry a question of Truth and Fact, not of individuals. The conclusions at which great and scholarly minds have arrived aid us very greatly, no doubt, in our investigations, and help us in forming a true and accurate judgment; but we accept such conclusions, not because of the fame of such minds, but because the conclusions themselves appeal to our sense of truth and commend themselves to our acceptance. And most men surely know what a subtle and complicated instrument the human mind is, and how easily even a robust intellect is apt to obscure itself; how frequently a truth which, by a certain process of thought and reasoning, has become impossible to a strong mind, presents to the spiritual perception of the unlearned no difficulty at all. Christianity itself and its earlier history offers striking illustrations of this fact. There are abundant instances in which the most spiritual and learned of men have been misled on the most simple points, and in which they have failed to assent to conclusions, to which the acceptance of their own premises compelled other Christian thinkers.

It is certainly difficult to explain Dr. Döllinger's attitude, in the face of his acceptance of the principle of

"development" and of the divine element underlying the progressive evolution of dogma. His principle, so ably and clearly laid down and illustrated in his *First Age of the Church*, seems to me to clearly foreshadow and contain that doctrine (of the Infallibility) which, chiefly on account of its formidable name, I am sure, is unhappily still the object of such constant bitter and virulent attack. I had no difficulty in accepting the doctrine when I really understood it. I see its moral necessity amidst the ever-varying conditions of human thought and life, as well as its sound Scriptural and historical basis, and it seems to me to be involved in the very conception and claim of a Revelation.

And in saying this I am not surely guilty of presumption, or of seeming to arrogate to myself a knowledge or judgment superior to that of a great scholar. It is a matter of faith, clearly, and of *spiritual* apprehension —not altogether one of intellectual reasoning. It is to my mind, moreover, not at all inconceivable that it may be part of the providence of God, that this doctrine so essential and necessary for the preservation amongst men of Revealed Truth, should be assailed by one of the greatest champions of the Catholic Church, and that every argument that could be adduced against it should be adduced, in order that, by its inherent power to withstand these assaults, the truth of the doctrine

might become the more clearly and fully established. That in the history of the Church and of Christianity God has occasionally made use of such instruments with a view to the elucidation of Truth and to the placing of it beyond the reach of human attack and dispute, who can doubt?

It is to the opposition of Arius in the fourth century that we owe the fully developed orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation; it is to that of Macedonius that we are indebted for the portion of our Creed defining the nature and operation of the Holy Ghost. What has hitherto been the actual result of the modern scientific attack on the historical veracity of Holy Scripture, but a closer examination of the text, a more painstaking historical investigation, and with these a most entire vindication of the accuracy and historical trustworthiness of its several books. Facts indeed have come to light, through recent documentary and monumental research which, but for the attack, might never have seen the light of day.

It is, moreover, interesting and instructive to notice that while one mind which may be under no necessity to receive a certain truth, and whose normal tendencies may be said to be in a direction diametrically opposite to it perceives its reasonableness and necessity by the most ordinary method of reflection, another mind, predisposed we would expect, to accept it and believe it,

nevertheless rejects and repudiates it. Let me again quote a writer on this subject who cannot be said to be predisposed in favour of the Papal claims, and who bases his conclusions purely upon inferences which, to his mind, follow logically from certain premises of necessity granted by every Catholic.

He says :—

"She [the Roman Catholic Church] is ideally, if not actually, the parliament of the believing world. Her doctrines, as she one by one unfolds them, emerge upon us like petals from a half-closed bud. They are not added arbitrarily from without; they are developed from within. They are the flowers contained from the first in the bud of our moral consciousness. When she formulates in these days something which has not been formulated before, she is no more enunciating a new truth than was Newton when he enunciated the theory of gravitation. Whatever truths, hitherto hidden, she may in the course of time grow conscious of, she holds that these were always implied in her teaching, though before she did not know it; just as gravitation was implied in many ascertained facts that men knew well enough long before they knew that it was implied in them. Thus far, then, the Church of Rome essentially is the spiritual sense of humanity, speaking to men through its proper and only possible organ." [1]

[1] W. H. Mallock, *Is Life worth Living?* p. 214.

Or again, in another portion of the essay :—

"We shall understand this [the worthlessness of natural theism] more clearly if we consider one of the first characteristics that a revelation necessarily claims, and the results that are at this moment, in a certain prominent case, attending on a denial of it. The characteristic is an absolute infallibility. Every supernatural religion that renounces its claims to this, it is clear can profess to be a semi-revelation only. It is a hybrid thing, partly natural and partly supernatural, and it thus practically has all the qualities of a religion that is wholly natural. In so far as it professes to be revealed, it of course professes to be infallible; but if the revealed part be in the first place hard to distinguish, and in the second place hard to understand—if it may mean many things, and many of those things contradictory—it might just as well have been never made at all. To make it in any sense an infallible revelation, or in other words a revelation to all, *to us*, we need a power to interpret the testament that shall have equal authority with that testament itself.

"Simple as this truth seems, mankind have been a long time in learning it. Indeed it is only in the present day that its practical meaning has come generally to be recognized. But now at this moment, upon all sides of us, history is teaching it to us by an example so clearly that we can no longer mistake it.

"That example is Protestant Christianity, and the condition to which, after three centuries, it is now visibly bringing itself. It is at last beginning to exhibit to us the true result of the denial of infallibility to a religion that professes to be supernatural. We are at last beginning to see in it neither the purifier of a corrupted revelation, nor the corrupter of a pure revelation, but the practical denier of all revelation whatsoever. It is fast evaporating into a mere natural theism, and is thus showing us what, as a governing power, natural theism is." [1]

But my hesitation to submit then and at once to the Catholic Church had another ground. I had intellectual conviction, it is true, on almost every doctrine of the Catholic Church, and on the reasonableness of her entire conception of the Christian Religion: but I had no moral certainty. So far my work had been of a purely preparatory character: I had cleared away intellectual difficulties. But somehow I felt instinctively that this did not make me a Catholic. My conviction represented the rational side of religion, and it seemed to me that the conclusions I had reached might conceivably be reached by a person who was not even a Christian, who merely built up a system on given premises. The outer form was there. I had built it up and given to it shape: there was that something wanting which was to give it

[1] Pp. 204, 205.

life and power of action. It would no doubt have been quite right for any person with the amount of knowledge and conviction I then possessed to submit himself to the Church, and he might with right have looked for that inward illumination which could scarcely fail to follow such an act of faith. But this course did not commend itself to me. It would not have been a wise one to adopt in my case. I had always been convinced, and my fuller studies had only confirmed this view that Christianity, if based upon and in a sense contained in historic facts, was pre-eminently an event or manifestation in the moral sphere, and that its essential truths are grasped by the spiritual sense, not merely by the intellect. I knew, both from personal experience and from that of my clerical life, that "no man can call Jesus the Lord but by the Holy Ghost," and that "no man can come to Him, unless it be given him by the Father." I was determined not to become a Catholic unless or until my intellectual conviction had become an inward spiritual and moral certainty. In spite of a thousand intellectual difficulties, I had certainly experienced the force of this inward moral conviction when I had first come under distinct religious impressions, and I had a feeling that, if the same Divine Spirit who had in my earlier days led me to the feet of the Saviour was leading me now into fuller truth, He would again bear witness and also instruct my conscience and

my heart. I arrived at this determination without any external aid and without seeking advice and guidance on the subject. It was the result of the normal action of my mind, consequent upon due reflection and prayer.

I do not know how far such a course may be considered a justifiable one by Catholics. Some might entertain a fear, and with good reason no doubt, that a mind which had reached a degree of conviction such as mine had reached was in danger of passing into a state of stagnation, and of thus dissipating or at least toning down the force of the truths it had gained. There was this danger, no doubt, and it may be a very real danger to many minds. But with my own conception of the real character of the Christian Religion I had no alternative; for, whatever my weaknesses and failings, I was sure of myself on one point. I had an intense love of Truth and a burning desire to possess it, and I felt morally certain that that desire had not been kindled in order to remain unsatisfied. Any disloyalty on my part in this direction could be of a temporary character only. I would lose life itself rather than give up the effort to understand its meaning and purpose, and, in the matter of Religion, to possess the highest truth attainable. I have since seen, from my closer acquaintance with Catholic thought, that my instinct was guiding me aright, and that my attitude was unquestionably a right and proper one.

Cardinal Vaughan says, in his introduction to Fr. Luke Rivington's book on *The Primitive Church and the See of Peter:* "The motives of credibility which may be learnt by reading and study do not produce the absolute and perfect certainty of faith. They lead a man to see that the objects of faith are worthy of belief; they show him that he is under an obligation to give to them the assent of faith. But it is grace, it is God, who inspires the soul with the pious inclination to believe, the *pia affectio ad credendum.*" The certainty of faith rests, not indeed upon the motives of credibility, or upon facts or arguments that may or may not be evident in themselves, but upon the veracity of God who has revealed them. Or, as the Vatican Council defines it: "Faith is a supernatural virtue, whereby, inspired and assisted by the grace of God, we believe that the things which He has revealed are true; not because of the intrinsic truth of the things, viewed by the natural light of reason, but because of the authority of God Himself, who reveals them, and who can neither deceive nor be deceived." [1]

But my want of moral assurance may, of course, have been due to the circumstance that my intellectual search had not yet reached its end. The doctrine which forms the keystone to the edifice of Divine Faith, and which I ought to have examined first of all

[1] Introd., pp. xiii., xiv.

and most carefully, had practically remained untouched to the last. My mind had throughout been satisfied with a sort of *a priori* sense of its reasonableness and necessity. From a fuller and closer examination of it, especially in its finally developed form, circumstances and certain impressions already referred to, had hitherto held me back. But it was now necessary that I should study the doctrine systematically and carefully, and to get a clear grasp of the Scriptural and historical as well as of the moral grounds on which it really rests. Upon this work, however, I could not enter at once. Other temporal duties and responsibilities were claiming my attention. I had to arrange for the breaking up of my home and my departure from ——.

And how shall I describe the feelings which were uppermost in my heart? There were hours when I could scarcely realize the magnitude of the change which was sweeping over my life. How great had been my hopes and expectations when I started upon my mission as a clergyman of the National Church, how keen had been my enthusiasm, how ardent my zeal for Christ and His Truth! How free had been my mind from the very shadow of a suspicion of the struggles and conflicts which were awaiting my soul! And now, after the lapse of a few short years, what a change had come over the entire scene, what a

disheartening outlook from the purely temporal point of view! I was severing my connection with my Church because I found myself morally and intellectually unable to accept her doctrines, and with this severance temporal anxieties and uncertainties of the gravest character stared me in the face. Was it unnatural that reflections of a most disquieting and sometimes even of a most gloomy character filled my mind? Where was I to go? What was I to do? How could I hope to secure some satisfactory means of a livelihood? Had I a right to inflict such loss and suffering upon those so near and dear to me and scarcely sharing my religious perplexities? Had I allowed a morbid tendency to misdirect and distort my mind and to impair my judgment? Was it quite impossible for me to make some honourable compromise —to wait at least until a little more time had elapsed and a further opportunity had been given me of testing the character and strength of my convictions? Was it not a most extraordinary thing that I should wholly reject and repudiate the claims of a Church, whose doctrines so many excellent and far better minds than my own, accepted unhesitatingly, and whose system they found it even possible to defend and justify? Was it conceivable that an unreasonable pride had taken possession of me, and that I found some gratification in an intellectual position different

and distinct from that of my friends and clerical brethren?

Those alone who have passed through similar conflicts, and who have stood face to face with this serious step under similar circumstances, can form a true conception of the nature and strength of these conflicting feelings—how they agitate the mind, how they undermine health and shake the entire moral and physical constitution to their very foundation. And in the hour of weakness, when our knees tremble and our hearts are faint, when we look about us for some means of escape from the severity of the conflict, it is then that the tempter approaches us with conventional sophistries and the seeming reasonableness of half-truths and makes a last supreme effort to divert us from our God-imposed task. It is then that we gain some practical insight into the nature of that temptation which was once fought out on the high mountain between the prince of evil and Him who was the Incarnate Son of God. How real to us and full of meaning are then those words of the great Apostle St. Paul: "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. Therefore take unto you the armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and stand in all things perfect." [1]

[1] Ephes. vi. 12, 13.

But my mind always regained its balance, and no influence that was at this time exercised upon me succeeded in shaking the force of my intellectual convictions. However difficult it might be for me to explain the attitude of other men's minds, there was none other possible for me. I was not insane. I had the power of calm thought and reflection. I knew how and on what grounds I had arrived at my conclusions, and I was certain that they followed necessarily and unavoidably from normal and logical processes of thought. The tendency of all the earlier moral and educational influences of my life, moreover, had from the very first been very decidedly against the conclusions and convictions I had now formed, and they were further hostile to all my temporal interests. Acceptance of these conclusions could scarcely fail to separate me from many valued friends. I had, throughout the whole course of my inquiry, never ceased praying that I might be directed aright and that God would efface from my mind any idea or impression that might be contrary to Truth. The convictions remained. Could it be reasonable under the circumstances to entertain doubt that God Himself had implanted them, and that the Divine Spirit of Truth was most certainly guiding and guarding my soul?

I entertained no bitter or resentful feeling against the authorities of my Church. I knew the strength of first

impressions and the persistence of a fatal bias created by formed habits of thought. While I felt the most profound contempt for certain individuals with whom I had come in contact in the course of my clerical life, and whom I could only regard as compromisers and time-servers, my feelings towards the Church as a whole was that of pity and sympathy. It grieved me to think that circumstances should be so widely instrumental in shutting out the light of Truth from so many loyal and truth-loving hearts. But I had one grievance, and, it will be admitted, a not unreasonable one, against the Anglican authorities. I felt that they were criminally careless in the matter of the education and training of their candidates for Holy Orders.

I was, and am to-day, morally certain that if I had at the time of my preparation for Ordination been made to pass through a single course of accurate instruction on distinctly Roman Catholic doctrine, enabling me to form accurate impressions of the real principles and system of the Catholic Church, the intellectual difficulty would have occurred to me at once, and I should never have received Anglican Orders at all. All the conflict and anguish through which I had passed would have been spared me. I felt that the knowledge I had gathered from my short and one-sided studies was imperfect and incomplete, and that the instructions I had received were based upon miscon-

ceptions and deliberate misstatements only calculated to distort and pervert the judgment. The greatest and most important of all controversies had been dismissed with a few half-truths and an appeal to history written from the Anglican or Protestant point of view. I knew, moreover, from experience that my position in this matter was not by any chance an isolated one or an exceptional instance of Anglican methods of education. I had not met with a single clergyman, in the whole course of my clerical career, who had an accurate knowledge of the actual facts of history, and who could write down in an intelligible manner what the Roman Catholic Church really taught. The conventional falsehoods were accepted by them without personal investigation and were handed on by them to the people committed to their care.

There is, indeed, no religious body whose ministers are so poorly equipped theologically as the clergy of the Anglican Church. Any intelligent layman who is interested in the matter, and who follows the progress of human thought, knows infinitely more about the real points at issue in the controversy with Rome than the average English clergyman, whose entire strength seems to lie in the quotation of popular and worn-out phrases, and in appeals to that deep-seated and unreasonable prejudice which is so characteristic of the English mind. From sheer ignorance he almost

always mis-states Roman doctrine. I again challenge the honest reader to test the accuracy of my statement by comparing ordinary clerical utterances on Roman doctrine with the authorized exposition of those doctrines as contained in Catholic works such as *Instructions in Christian Doctrine*, or Cardinal Gibbons' *Faith of our Fathers.*

And how can we wonder at this state of things when it is borne in mind that the larger number of the Anglican clergy pass from the University, from the cricket and football field straight into the pulpit, to instruct their flocks on subjects of which they have in only too many instances a most immature knowledge themselves. Many candidates for Ordination have, as a matter of fact, no theological training at all, and begin to read for their examination only a few months before Ordination and without receiving any kind of personal guidance and instruction. The Bishop's requirements as officially stated seem formidable enough, it is true; but what is the value of any amount of one-sided reading without personal instruction and the opportunities of expressing difficulties and exchanging views and ideas? Such an examination is purely literary in form and character, and is in no sense a test of the personal, moral, and intellectual convictions of the candidate. I have known many men to whom it was a source of un-

bounded satisfaction that they were practically ignorant of Theology proper, and that, with their meagre attainment, they succeeded in getting themselves ordained. And these are the men whom the National Church lets loose upon the world, and whom it commissions to instruct the people in matters of the most vital and transcending interest and importance. Can we really wonder that its moral hold over the conscience is so rapidly and perceptibly diminishing? I know, of course, that a short course of theological study is invariably recommended to candidates by most of the Anglican Bishops; but these courses are ridiculously short. Any good, moreover, which they are likely to produce is neutralized by the fact that every Theological College is identified with a school of thought, and that its teaching is in consequence one-sided. It is possible for any man to tell accurately what view is likely to be the dominating element in any particular college before he becomes a member of it. It is his own theological bias which generally determines his choice, and which is thus further confirmed and strengthened. And how is the mind, under such circumstances, to form an accurate judgment and to become qualified to estimate the true proportion of things? It is perhaps unnecessary that an Anglican minister should have the technical education of a Catholic priest: he is a social rather than a spiritual

force; but it is surely essential that he should have an accurate knowledge of the source and history of the doctrine which he stands pledged to repudiate as hostile and contrary to the true mind of his Church.

When I had finally taken my departure from —— and settled down in London, I had still some thought of taking temporary work. I knew from experience that it was possible to minister in the Anglican Church without teaching any doctrine at all, and, although my my own feelings were decidedly against such a course, I was anxious not to appear unreasonable or perhaps over-sensitive in the eyes of my friends. There was no reason why I should not take occasional duty and preach an occasional sermon. It would keep me from becoming morbid and from unduly concentrating my thoughts upon my religious difficulties. My Catholic friend, I argued, did not think I was compelled to go until I was wholly convinced, and the latter was certainly not the case. How the struggling human mind clings to the last straw which offers the smallest possible promise of support, and how terribly slow the heart is to trust God wholly and without reserve!

As a matter of fact I never entered upon such contemplated temporary duty. It was offered me again and again, but I invariably shrank from my task when the time came. An irresistible force, a kind of inward

necessity, seemed to be holding me back. I only preached one more sermon in an Anglican pulpit. It was on the occasion of a public festival, and I had been urgently requested to discharge this duty for a clergyman who was in much need of assistance. When I left the pulpit and the church at the conclusion of the service, I had an inward moral certainty that my clerical career was over, and that a chapter had just closed in the history of my life. I had also been requested to take an early celebration of the Holy Communion; but this I had at once and very definitely declined.

And so "I went out from them because I was not of them," and I went, like Abraham, not knowing whither I went. Necessity was laid upon me. A Divine and inscrutable Power had the care of my soul and the guidance of my spirit. Of this I was morally convinced, and in this thought my heart found its rest.

I took an early opportunity of calling upon my old friend the Catholic priest. He was extremely sympathetic, and seemed to understand the severity of my mental struggle. He did all he could to make my life bearable, and in some measure to fill the blank which was now beginning to make itself so bitterly felt. I spent many hours in his company; he took me out for walks and drives, and directed my thoughts into different channels. He never flinched in pointing out to

me my duty in the case of full and final conviction. But he never by one word sought to hasten events or to induce me to be received without further delay. He probably knew that I could be trusted not to tamper with my conscience, and that my time had not yet come. I knew that prayers were being offered in his Church on my behalf, and that he made special mention of me at Mass. But no kind of direct or indirect pressure or influence was being exercised upon me. My mind pursued its normal course and worked its independent way.

Under my friend's guidance I made a study of the doctrine of the Infallibility both from the historic and the moral standpoint, and discussed with him any difficulties that presented themselves from time to time. But I cannot say that these were of a formidable character. They were far more in the direction of "feelings" and prejudices, than of reason and historic fact. I consulted the best and most trustworthy exponents of the doctrine, and read up the more recent controversies to which it has given rise. I must confess that I was filled with amazement when I found myself face to face with the amount of indubitable evidence which can be adduced in favour of the Papal claims, even when considered from the purely historical standpoint. It was altogether beyond my expectations, and I am confident that this will be the impression created

upon all who really study the facts as history presents them, and who do not shrink from the only reasonable inference that is to be drawn from them. Let any unprejudiced inquirer weigh the evidence adduced by such a book as Allnatt's *Cathedra Petri*. Even allowing a fair margin for a possible misquotation or a forced interpretation; or for a bias here and there in favour of a certain tradition, the force of the evidence as a whole is overwhelming, and there can remain little doubt as to what was held concerning the origin and authority of the Holy See in the very earliest times.

And what astonished me still more was the fact that Protestant divines of high scholarship and standing, such as Lightfoot in England and Harnack in Germany, bore striking, even though evidently unconscious, testimony to it. In examining their statements and estimating the evidence that a mind already convinced of the truth of all other Catholic doctrines could scarcely fail to draw from it, I again and again exclaimed within myself: "What an excellent case these men would make of it had they been born and educated in the Catholic Church, and did the evidence happen to tell in their favour!" As it was, the facts to which painstaking research had inevitably led them were loosely and incidentally stated, while their bearing upon the great controversy with respect to Rome's claims was either obscured or entirely ignored.

One or two points, besides those definitely derived from Scripture and History, struck me very forcibly.

1. The idea of Infallibility is, of necessity, contained and implied in the very claim of a Revelation. An authoritative disclosure of Divine Truth, which has no authoritative voice by which it can make itself known and heard is, in its practical effect, no disclosure at all. The Spirit is not visible to mortal eyes, and has of Himself no organ by which He can act upon mankind. His very appearance and manifestation involves the need of a human channel, through which His illuminating influence can make itself felt amongst mankind. On logical grounds, therefore, the entire claim of the Christian Religion to be an authoritative Divine Revelation vanishes the moment the Divinely-human authority disappears. Mere conjecture, and opinion, and sentiment take its place.

I would again refer the reader to Mr. Mallock's remarkable words quoted on page 240.

2. Granting the premises, which every true Christian grants, that there is a Divine Revelation, the doctrine of the Papal Infallibility is a most reasonable one. Protestant difficulties on this point are chiefly due to misconceptions, in many instances based upon deliberate misstatements, on the part of those whom we might expect to know better.

The term "Infallibility" is a very formidable, and,

at first sight, a very startling one; but, as in the case of so many other Catholic doctrines, a very simple principle underlies it. The Catholic Church holds, on the clear grounds of Holy Scripture, that she is the organ of the Divine Spirit and that He is constantly with her, directing her and "guiding her into all Truth." But since He has, for His manifestation, chosen human instrumentality, subject necessarily to error and weakness, it is but reasonable to suppose that when that instrumentality is employed to set forth and define *necessary truths of the Faith*, with which the spiritual welfare of millions of souls is bound up, He will also guard it from error and inspire it so that it cannot utter that which is untrue. The presumption is a most necessary, a most scriptural, and a most reasonable one, and flows naturally from the doctrine of the Church and the Holy Spirit. Denial of it practically implies that, although the Spirit moves and acts in the Church, He will nevertheless allow her chief pastor to set forth a lie and thus delude the entire Christian world; or that He is more likely to guide the individual and partly instructed mind aright than the learned Bishops and chief pastor of the Church. Men do not always realize, in their ardour, what their objections logically involve and to what they practically commit themselves. Infallibility or, in other words, indubitable Divine guidance, was always implied in the Catholic teaching from

the earliest times. The cohesion and preservation of the Catholic Church is unthinkable on other grounds. As in the history of other doctrines and of the Creeds themselves, "present necessity" and the fulness of time and knowledge made it an article of Catholic Faith. But it had from the earliest times been implicitly believed.

3. The necessity and reasonableness of the doctrine of the Papal Infallibility is further demonstrated by the effect which is produced by its absence.

I need but point to the Anglican Church and the bodies which have again dissented from her—to the chaotic state of Christendom outside the Catholic pale. Where is unity? Where is peace? Where is *certainty?* A thousand voices are in our ears, each with an equal claim to inspiration and authority. And meanwhile Christian Truth is dissolving itself away and it is becoming more and more difficult to ascertain what God has really revealed. The very primary claim of the Christian Religion is vanishing before the advance of rationalism and free thought.

And the Roman Church is abused and assailed because of her rigidity and because she will not become an additional element in this world of contending and mutually antagonistic factions! Why, it is *because* of her rigidity that she is what she is, and that she can still claim to be the authoritative teacher of the nations

and the guide of the human soul into the light of Revealed Truth. Her rigidity is the rigidity of God and of Truth, against which the waves of human error and of arrogant presumption have beat, and will ever beat, in vain.

VII.

ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE CHURCH.

WITH convictions such as I have sketched out, firmly and deeply rooted in my mind, it is scarcely necessary for me to say that, by the time I had concluded my examination, my intellectual difficulties had disappeared. Indeed, I understood for the first time what men really mean when they say that if the matter is pursued logically, it is a choice between Rome and unbelief. It was most certainly so with me. With the knowledge now before me and holding, as I did, a firm belief in the Incarnation, any position but the Catholic one seemed inconceivable to me.

And this very firm intellectual conviction naturally began to work on my moral and spiritual nature. I had moments of divine perception when the veil hiding the unseen world seemed to be drawn aside, and my entire spiritual consciousness responded to the appeal of my intellect: when I was seized by an uncontrollable

impulse to submit to the Church without further delay. Still these experiences were of a transitory character, and I again and again distrusted them under the strong impression, that a fuller and clearer conviction would ere long be vouchsafed to me. I gave myself to constant and earnest prayer, and strove to keep my soul free from those stains of wilful sin which I knew to be so fatal to the clear discernment of spiritual Truth. But the uncertain and unsettled state of my mind, and indeed of my life, left its traces upon my physical health. I began to suffer from insomnia and from such a sense of general prostration that I could scarcely nerve myself to any intellectual or physical effort. The thought of a possible early death was not infrequently present to my mind. I rejected it as an evidence of the morbid and debilitated state of my mind. But this thought brought me to a sense of my position, and I verily believe was the means which God employed in enabling me to test the strength of my convictions. I had never in my life feared death; but now it presented itself to me in a somewhat different aspect. I felt that if I died suddenly, it would certainly be outside the Church of God, without conscious deliberate submission, without the grace of valid Sacraments, without the Church's prayers during and after my departure. And how could I hope to withstand the searching light of the Judgment Day, almost persuaded as I was and

yet outside the Ark of Safety, outside the Divine Covenant, outside the assured means of salvation? It was no consolation to me to reflect that other men held similar views and yet believed themselves in safety. I knew that I had full knowledge and conviction; God had vouchsafed to me an abundant and exceptional degree of light; from amongst a thousand hindrances and obstacles He had rescued and delivered me and had brought me to the very gate of the promised land. Was I trifling with His grace? Should I after all slip away from His firm hand and, like so many others, lose myself in the maze of the world's errors and empty philosophies? The degree of my conviction can be estimated when I say, that I wrote out a statement addressed to my old friend, in which I made confession of my faith in the Catholic Church and in the truth of Catholic doctrine, and begged him to receive me into the Church without delay, should sudden illness deprive me of the power of speech or of thought. This document, addressed to him, I constantly carried with me, pledging those nearest to me to forward it at once should sudden sickness come upon me.

Still I hesitated. I began to fear that in my then state of health my conversion might be ascribed by my friends to an impaired judgment, consequent upon want of mental and physical tone. And I was determined that my submission, if it took place, should admit of

no manner of doubt, but should be the deliberate act of my sound and unimpaired judgment and of my normal self at its very best. But I called upon my Catholic friend, whose practical and really helpful letters I have given on pp. 198 and 214, and at his very earnest request I sought an interview with Father ——, an experienced and learned Jesuit connected with the Church of the Immaculate Conception at Farm Street. I must say, that I was glad of the opportunity of discussing matters with a pious and learned man who, I was told, had an extensive knowledge of the difficulties besetting inquirers, and who would help me to determine how far I was justified in still further delaying my submission to the Church.

I cannot speak in sufficiently warm terms of the courtesy and true Christian kindness and sympathy shown me by this excellent priest and of the manner in which he dealt with me and my difficulties. I gave him a full and explicit account of my religious position, and of the circumstances which had at first created and subsequently confirmed and accentuated my doubts of the tenableness of Protestantism and of the modern Anglican claim. I explained to him how by an entirely independent method of research I had arrived at my present convictions, and at an intellectual assent to all Catholic Doctrine ; how I had come to regard them as agreeable to both Reason and Revelation. I also told

him, that the prolonged moral and intellectual conflict had greatly impaired my physical health, and had caused me to entertain a certain feeling of fear and misgiving lest I should be making my submission in what might reasonably be regarded as a debilitated and abnormal condition of my mind and my judgment.

Father —— expressed the warmest sympathy with me in my more than difficult position ; but declared himself in full accord with my view of the matter. He said : "You must remember that it is entirely a question between your own soul and God. If the knowledge and inspiration which you have received are, as I cannot doubt, from Him, He will deepen and confirm them and, in His own time, complete the work which He has begun. You have done what you could in clearing away the intellectual difficulties and hindrances. My advice, then, to you is : Put away all your books ; give up study for a time ; see your friends and do what you can to re-establish your physical health. Be calm and confident in the thought, that you are earnest and true to yourself and determined to obey God's will immediately you have clearly and finally ascertained it. God knows the travail of your soul, and you are, so far as I can see, in no spiritual danger. But, in your daily prayers, add an earnest petition, that God's full light may shine into your soul and that if He is really guiding you, all remaining doubts and

difficulties may pass away from your mind. Place yourself entirely in His hands, so that He may direct you as He will."

Father —— further recommended me very earnestly to use the following prayer daily. It was used by Cardinal Newman and is taken from his *Meditations and Devotions*:—

"O my God, I confess that *Thou canst* enlighten my darkness. I confess that Thou *alone* canst. I *wish* my darkness to be enlightened. I do not know whether Thou wilt: but that Thou canst and that I wish, are sufficient reasons for me to *ask*, what Thou at least hast not forbidden my asking. I hereby promise that by Thy grace which I am asking, I will embrace whatever I at length feel certain is the Truth, if ever I come to be certain. And by Thy grace I will guard against all self-deceit, which may lead me to take what nature would have rather than what reason approves."

I must say that I was very strongly impressed with this interview. It had a bracing and wholesome influence upon my mind, and I acted upon the advice given me. But what a contrast between the Jesuit as he is pictured by popular fancy and by the morbid imagination of Protestant writers, and as he is in reality! It was not without some misgiving that I sought this long-delayed interview. I was certainly free, as I have already remarked, from that extraordinary prejudice

against the Catholic clergy which characterizes the orthodox Protestant mind; still it is so difficult to entirely overcome that vague feeling of distrust which the diligent and habitual dissemination of falsehood establishes in the mind. Unconsciously almost it affects the judgment and prejudices its operations. I was not strong physically; my mind was tired and weary with incessant thought and study; I was in that condition in which a powerful influence, in favour of an immediate surrender, might easily and successfully have been exercised upon me. And here was I seeking an interview with a Jesuit priest, with one of that hated and distrusted religious Society which, according to the Protestant tradition, insinuates itself into our social life, perverts and distorts the judgment of the unwary, and, regardless of consequences, brings the intellect into bondage to itself. Was I really proof against such a danger? Had I satisfactory evidence that the popular tradition was not based upon fact?

But what actually happened to me? I met with a refined and courteous gentleman, who had evidently an accurate knowledge of human nature, who was possessed of sound reason as well as of deep religious convictions, who entered into my difficulties with real sympathy, and who counselled me not to be received into the Church until all my misgivings had disappeared, and until my intellectual convictions had also

become moral certainties—who, in fact, gave the advice which any sincere Christian of any denomination was bound to give. Was it possible that my experience was an exceptional one, and that this was but another illustration of Jesuit cunning and craftiness? I cannot say that I seriously entertained any such suspicion; still, circumstances brought me in contact with two other priests of experience and standing with neither of whom I had been in any kind of previous communication, and who could have had no knowledge of my disposition and temperament. One was the learned and amiable Rector of Manresa House (a Jesuit retreat); the other a distinguished Oratorian. The former also emphatically urged me to cease reading and to give myself to prayer. He pointed out to me that although reason had to do its work, mathematical certainty was, from the nature of the case, of necessity unattainable. It was, in his opinion, ultimately an experience in the moral sphere, and therefore due to the immediate action of the Spirit of God upon the soul. And this action was chiefly exercised in response to earnest prayer and supplication. "Let God do His work," he said, "in the manner that may seem best to Him."

Father —— of the Oratory gave me much the same advice, but begged me to fix some definite time, lest I should, by continued and perhaps unreasonable delay, pass the actual point of conviction and thus dissipate the

grace which had already been given me. He told me that this was, in his opinion, a very real danger. He had, in the long course of his priestly life, again and again watched the effect of prolonged and unjustifiable hesitation on the ground of some imagined and, in most cases, temporal difficulties, and when both heart and mind were already convinced. In many instances such tampering with the conscience had resulted in an entire loss of faith, and in a repudiation of even the fundamental truths of the Christian Religion. He said, "You must remember that this is the season of your greatest spiritual conflict. The unseen world of evil will be straining every nerve to keep you from the Faith; and difficulties will again and again be suggested to you. Wait until you are physically quite strong; but do not wait an unreasonable time. Fix a certain period, and if by that time, and after constant prayer, your conviction remains unshaken, obey the voice of your conscience with calm faith and assurance." In reply to a further question I subsequently put to him, Father —— wrote:

"Of course you must be clear that you are not acting from any merely emotional impulse or from any other motive in the step you contemplate. At the same time, as the step involves great sacrifices on your part, you cannot expect freedom from many disturbing thoughts before the decision is made. If the Church of Rome is the Church of Christ, to join it means your salvation,

and therefore your conversion will be necessarily opposed by the world, the flesh, and the devil in every subtle form. You seem to me to have acted with full prudence and deliberation already. It is some months as I understand since you resigned your incumbency, and your experience of the Church of England's central defects is so complete that time could not add thereto. You ought then, I think, to be suspicious of any prolonged delay. The enemy of your soul would never dare suggest your never taking the step, but he would suggest *not now*. I trust then that you will name in your own mind some definite term, say —— Sunday, by which you will, please God, be a visible member of His Church. God bless and help you."

So much, then, for the supposed eagerness of the Catholic clergy and more especially of the Jesuits to make converts at any cost and under any circumstances! I can say emphatically that the fuller knowledge of the Catholic clergy, which my life in the Catholic Church has now given me, most fully confirms the impression which I formed at this time, when misgivings and prejudices were unquestionably still lingering in my mind. Good sound common sense, based upon a true knowledge of human nature, combined with genuine manly piety and a constant sense of the greatness and responsibility of their sacred calling are, to my mind, the chief characteristics of the English Catholic clergy.

There is an entire absence of that craftiness and subtlety in dealing with weak and unwary souls which is still ascribed to them by irresponsible and misinformed persons. They are intensely convinced that faith is a Divine gift, a thing which no man can create in the human soul, and that conversion is from beginning to end a Divine work. They are naturally and properly urgent and anxious, when they really feel certain that a point of full conviction has been reached, and they spare no pains in bringing about such a conviction; but in doing this they adopt right and honourable methods and act on ordinary principles of reason and common sense. I have, in the course of my clerical experience, met with instances in which doubt might, with far better reason, be thrown upon the methods adopted by Protestants in bringing a soul to what they term "a saving knowledge of Christ" or in weaning it from "Catholic misbelief." I know of several cases in which the means employed in effecting this end were of a more than "shady" and questionable character. And, bearing in mind the Protestant Rule of Faith and the doctrine of the right of the private judgment, such a course can, after all, be defended with far less justification in the case of a Protestant minister than in that of a Catholic priest, who believes his Church to be the only assured means of Divine grace and salvation. From the standpoint of Catholic belief, what should we

think of a priest who was *not* eager in bringing a soul really convinced within the safety of the one true Fold? And, indeed, with a clear understanding of Catholic doctrine, it is difficult to see how any but reasonable means are possible. The Profession of Faith, required to be made by converts, is a very severe test. Reception into the Church is impossible until it can be made whole-heartedly and without reserve. But how can such an effect be brought about except by individual thought and effort and by ordinary methods of religious research? A man is either convinced of the truth of Catholic doctrine, or he is not. If he is, it is right that he should join the Church at once; if he is not, no priest can create the necessary moral and intellectual conviction in his mind or, in its absence, receive him into the Church. Really accurate information on the subject, and the exercise of ordinary common sense dispose of the difficulty, and disperse a very host of misconceptions based upon one-sided statements or deliberate falsehood.

But, of course, every convert to the Catholic Church knows that the Catholic clergy have an infinitely better knowledge of human nature and are, by reason of careful and technical training, far better fitted to be the guides of human souls and to deal with the moral problems apt to perplex and harass the mind, than Anglican ministers whose training is meagre and one-

sided and whose influence is chiefly in a social and philanthropic direction. The very constitution of the National Church, its system of organization, are apt to efface from it the distinctly spiritual element. Here, too, it is not a difference of degree but of kind. A very gulf separates the Anglican minister from the Catholic priest. An entirely different spirit pervades the Catholic Church. An Anglican rector is a social and, to some extent, a moral force: a person of much local influence who imparts a certain religious flavour and element to all forms of the secular life. The Catholic priest is what the Anglican rector can never be: the spiritual guide of souls, the reprover of sin, the temporal judge and punisher of moral offences, the comforter of the sin-laden, the real friend of the poor, the constant living witness amongst men to the existence and reality of an unseen world and of the near approach of a Judgment Day. This distinction will, I am certain, come out more clearly and fully in proportion as Catholic thought and life are really understood and appreciated by the English people. It is perceived by every convert from Anglicanism to the Catholic Church.

And thus several months passed away. I had put away my books and with them all systematic thought of controverted points of Religion. I had almost entirely ceased to attend Anglican services. The very sound and phraseology of the Anglican Liturgy

grated on my feelings and suggested to my mind conflict and religious strife, and restlessness of thought and of heart. In fact, I felt entirely and hopelessly estranged from it in spirit. At times a feeling of genuine surprise passed over my mind at the thought that I had been so long, and was really still, a minister of the Anglican Church.

The very atmosphere of Catholic churches, on the other hand, had a calming and soothing influence upon my spirit. It suggested peace and restfulness, and the cessation of strife and bitterness and controversy. A sense of God's presence, such as I had never experienced in any Anglican church, invariably crept over my soul and filled it with confidence and joy. I made it a practice of frequently attending the celebration of Mass and the service of Solemn Benediction, and for weeks I almost daily said my prayers either at the Oratory or at some other Catholic church in different parts of London. I always had the consciousness that God was nearer to me there than anywhere else, and that thus my spirit's communion with Him was less laboured and hindered.

But no human influence of any kind was brought to bear upon me. I saw a good deal of my friends, none of whom were Catholics, and, in my reading, I was careful to avoid any book that had any bearing upon the subject which had so long occupied my thoughts. I left

myself, in the truest sense, absolutely in God's hands. So entirely did I abstain from any reference to the matter, that some of my friends, as I have since learnt, were under the impression that the phase was passing away and that Rome was ceasing to fascinate my mind. But the end of the long conflict was rapidly approaching.

I was on a visit to my old friend Father ——. It was a very solemn season of the Church's year, and deeply impressive services were being held daily in the Catholic churches. I had attended several of them already. Father —— invited me to accompany him to ——, where large numbers of Protestants are known to attend the services on these peculiarly solemn occasions. I was deeply and exceptionally impressed with the simple but beautiful ritual and with the words of earnest warning and admonition which fell from the preacher's lips. A solemn hush pervaded the entire church and congregation; and a feeling of the most intense yearning came over my soul. I was filled with an awful sense of responsibility, and with a deep consciousness that it was my hour of grace in the day of His visitation. Instinctively I realized that the conflict was over and that the end had come. I knelt down in the church and in a sense made my submission. I thanked God for the gift of that "kindly light" which had so marvellously directed and illuminated my path. I besought Him to forgive my hesitation, my distrust

of Him, my wavering and doubting, and to give me strength and courage to profess and embrace the Truth He had so clearly revealed to me.

When I rose from my knees I felt happier and better than I had felt for years. The cloud had passed from my mind, and there was an indescribable sense of calmness and certainty in my soul. I was conscious of a new strength, such as God alone is able to give to the human heart.

Father ——, who had been pushed by the crowd to another part of the church, joined me at the entrance, and seemed to see at a glance that a change had passed over me, and that the end had come at last. I returned with him to his house and we remained silent and constrained for the rest of the day. In the evening he came over to me very quietly and said: "My dear ——, the end clearly has come: had you not better be received at once?"

It was the first direct appeal he had ever made to me and I was deeply touched. I saw that he had read my character aright and that the appeal cost him an effort even now. But, of course, under the changed circumstances, a solemn duty was laid upon him, and he was anxious to discharge it. After fuller consideration, however, my friend urged me to communicate with the Bishop of —— and to place myself at once and entirely in his hands.

His Lordship received me on the following day and put to me a very simple but certainly inclusive and comprehensive question: "Are you absolutely convinced, in your heart and mind, that there is a Divinely instituted teacher of Truth on earth and that that teacher is the Holy Catholic and Roman Church?" Upon my unhesitating admission, that reason as well as prolonged research and reflection and, as I could not doubt, the immediate operation of the Spirit of Truth upon my soul, had created this certainty within me, he replied: "Then you have but one duty: you must make your whole-hearted submission to the Catholic Church."

The Bishop most kindly offered me the hospitality of his own house and every facility for making careful preparation for this final and solemn act in the history of my religious life. But another and very difficult duty lay before me. I had still to inform my family of the serious step I had finally and definitely determined to take.

VIII.

AT PEACE.

AND now very little remains to be told. I went into retirement for the better part of a week and, with the assistance of a learned and amiable priest, made a careful preparation for my reception into the Church. Once more I had an opportunity of going briefly over the whole ground. But the time for doubt or misgiving had passed away. My mind was absolutely clear. There was a sense of quietness and certainty in my heart; a deep moral conviction in my inmost soul. It was with no faltering or hesitating voice that I made my confession of faith and my submission to the Catholic Church. I felt convinced, that the spiritual truths to which I was giving my unqualified assent had come to me by revelation of God. I received conditional Baptism on the day of my reception, and was privately confirmed a day or two after, the devout prayers of many earnest hearts accompanying my every step. It was the most

solemn experience in the entire history of my religious life. But there was no excitement attending it; no tumult of conflicting feelings and emotions; no straining after peculiar and exceptional religious impressions. All was simple and normal and natural. God had called me and I had come to obey Him; had come to claim the place which He had appointed me in the kingdom of His Divine Son.

When all was over and I knelt at the foot of the altar to make my thanksgiving, a sense of unutterable calmness and security stole over my soul and I realized that I was at peace at last. I had the most perfect inward conviction that with me doubt and uncertainty had passed away for ever. The long strife was over; the battle done. What was there now, excepting deliberate and mortal sin, that could separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? Had he not manifested His love to me in an almost miraculous way and in abundant measure? Was not the Spirit of Truth bearing witness in my inmost soul?

Care and trouble and even suffering might be awaiting me upon my return into the busy world without; disappointments many could scarcely fail to meet me on the thorny path which I should now have to traverse in my journey through life. But what were they compared with the peace and calmness which reigned in my soul, and with the moral and mental anguish through which

I had already passed? I had sought and found the Pearl of Great Price, and with it secured the one thing really worth possessing in this fleeting and transitory world. And could I not trust Him who had given me so much? Would he not further direct my step and illuminate my path, and give me strength to bear the burdens which He might still see fit to lay upon me?

And thus I committed my soul to His keeping and prayed Him to guide me safely through the dangers and temptations of life, to make sorrow and suffering the means of my moral education and discipline, and to keep me to the end of my life true and steadfast in that Faith which I had won for myself after such a long and hard fight, and in which alone the soul has the assured means of life and salvation.

And now, after the lapse of time and with a fuller and more intimate knowledge of the doctrine and practice of the Catholic Church, what are my impressions, in what light do I regard the religious conflicts through which I have passed?

I can say emphatically and without hesitation that since the day of my reception into the Church not a shadow of doubt has crossed my mind as to the truth of the Catholic Faith and my duty in making my submission. My books have remained closed, because the sense of certainty and assurance has continued with me, and

has confirmed and deepened the spiritual impression I received.

I regard the doctrinal position of the Catholic Church as absolutely unassailable. When rightly understood as a connected whole, of which its separate parts are mutually dependent and explanatory, it is logical and consistent throughout, and is in the truest sense, as Mr. Mallock terms it, "the moral sense of mankind." I look upon Catholicism as the only rational expression of spiritual Christianity, embodying in itself the scattered truths contained in other religions and thus, by appealing to and satisfying the fundamental religious instincts of men in every condition of life and development, substantiating its claim to universal dominion in the spiritual sphere.

I have followed the development of the controversy between Rome and Anglicanism with the keenest interest; but I have heard of nothing that could be urged against the reasonableness of my intellectual difficulties: that could be regarded as a satisfactory solution of them other than and different from that offered in the Catholic Church. I am quite certain that the problems which presented themselves to my mind at every step in my clerical career, are the problems which perplex a thousand minds in the Anglican Church at this present moment, and that they are really at the root of the manifest decay of its

spiritual life. I am still entirely convinced that if earnestly faced they can, in a logical mind, have but one termination.

Ignorance and prejudice, it is true, are still barring the way; but amongst the educated classes a true spirit of inquiry is making itself felt, and with it an entire change of attitude towards the Catholic Faith. Numbers of the educated laity, whose names seldom become known to the outside world, are constantly passing from Anglicanism into the Catholic Church.

The worship and practice of the Church are to my mind calculated to express and satisfy the truest aspirations and instincts of our spiritual nature. There is underlying them that element of certainty and confidence, that reality which creates in the heart and mind of the worshipper a deep consciousness of the Divine Presence. This is a chief and distinguishing characteristic of Catholic worship. And its influence is admitted and felt by many devout Protestants and others outside the Church.

Catholicism, as expressed by the Church's forms and symbols, is emphatically the positive Religion. It asserts definitely, and in distinct and carefully considered language and, respecting the necessary truths of the Faith, it never gives an uncertain sound. Whatever the strife of tongues, the contentions of human philosophies and "science falsely so called" outside the Church's pale,

within all is calm and certain. It is the Divine sphere. God is there, and when He speaks He speaks with authority. All human voices are hushed.

Thus the contrast between Anglican and Catholic worship is an immense one. It can only be felt, it cannot be described. The difference is one of kind, not of degree. In the Anglican Church mind speaks to mind; the human element incessantly asserts and obtrudes itself. In the Catholic Church the Spirit speaks to the spirit; the Divine overshadows the human, and, in its realized presence, the heart finds its true peace.

But the feeling of which I am most deeply and most constantly conscious is that of intense gratitude to Almighty God, that He gave me grace to face my difficulties and to escape from the house of bondage while there was time. I fully recognize the terrible dangers which surround the earnest and truth-loving soul, and the fatal fascination of those subtle sophistries of the world which are so calculated to lull it into a false and fancied security. Well might Cardinal Newman express his deep anxiety on behalf of his friends, lest they should come to the point of conviction and be passing it and losing their chance of conversion. The Spirit does not always continue to strive with men. The hour of grace may never return to a soul which has in the first instance failed to respond. "God has not chosen every one to salvation. It is a rare gift to

be a Catholic. It may be offered to us once in our lives and never again; and if we have not seized on the 'accepted time,' nor known in our day the things which are for our peace, oh, the misery for us!"

There is, I know, an appearance of sweet reasonableness in the current popular arguments against the legitimate claims of the Roman Catholic Church. Their tendency is to stifle doubt and to divert the mind from the path of earnest and independent research: to throw dust into the eyes of the understanding. And the human heart is so weak; it is so ready to rest content with religious platitudes or half-truths, and to seek refuge in the views of the majority. Reared in a barren and dreary land, it knows nothing of the beauties and joys of that world which lies beyond the scope of its perception. Many of the authorized teachers of the people, we are told, are satisfied with the religious conditions in England as they are; and what ground is there, says the practical worldly mind, for anxiety and disquietude? Have they not also examined the matter fairly and without prejudice? Have they not also full and accurate knowledge of the subject? May not we rest content if they find it possible to be content?

What a forcible and dangerous argument for a soul in distress! What a subtle and powerful weapon in the hands of the evil one! But how weak its logic, how worthless and self-destructive the foundation upon

which it rests! It might surely with equal force be directed against Christianity itself, and it might be reasoned that if there are clever men who, on the sure grounds of their knowledge, reject the claims of the Universal Church, there are cleverer ones still who reject the Incarnation and the Divinity of Christ, and that some of the cleverest of all reject Christianity altogether, and with it belief in God and in a state of life after death? Why not carry the argument to its logical conclusion by going to headquarters at once, and, by adopting the views of those who hold the foremost place in the world of historic and scientific research? The argument clearly destroys itself, and it is not easy to understand how really reflecting minds can adopt it. Some historical and theological facts, undoubtedly, admit of different interpretation and may, with apparent consistency, be fitted into a preconceived system of religious thought. The best minds, moreover, are apt to be dominated by inherited prejudice or misconception and by the commonly accepted view of things. But, in the matter of Revealed Religion, it is not surely a question of intellectual perception alone; it is a question of spiritual discernment, of inward moral apprehension. God is apt to hide His truth from the wise and prudent and to reveal it unto babes. The attainment of Divine certainty is chiefly an experience in the spiritual sphere. And, as all men know,

"The Spirit bloweth where it listeth." "No man can call Jesus the Lord but by the Holy Ghost."

"Entrance into the Church of God," says a great convert to Catholicism,[1] "to any living creature is a mere act of sovereign grace. It is in the power of our wills to put an obex to this grace; it is in the power of our wills to decline at any moment the gentle, delicate, but still unfailing guidance of this grace, not to follow our partner in the dance; but it is not in the power of the most steadfast will, or of the clearest intellect, or of the most honest purpose all united, to make its own way into the Church of God like a conqueror by the triumphant conclusions of the reason. God keeps the thread which guides through that labyrinth in His own hand: we may break it or cast it aside, but we cannot do without it. And as He opens the door at last, so He keeps the time when He will open the door at His own disposal."

But wilful ignorance and indifference, on the other hand, cannot be urged as an excuse for evading or ignoring our responsibility. The sins of the fathers are undoubtedly visited upon the children in the spiritual as well as in the natural order. It is each man's duty to face the greatest and most important of all questions bravely and in the strength of God, clearing away difficulties to the very best of his power. God works with

[1] T. W. Allies, *A Life's Decision.*

us, not without us—for the most part by natural and normal means. He illuminates the mind which is really earnest and eagerly striving to know the Truth, and He leaves the superficial and indifferent, who do not think the matter worth an effort or who have prejudged it, to themselves. For it cannot surely be urged, with any seriousness, that those who seek Truth for its own sake, and who give themselves no end of trouble in the direction of Scriptural and historical research, are apt to end by perverting their judgment and by obscuring the light; while the apathetic and indolent, content with the state of things into which they were born, must be considered as remaining in the calm and serene possession of Truth? A Divine element surely is at work illuminating and rightly directing the searching mind, and it is in proportion to our obedience and loyalty that its operations are making themselves felt.

And this Divine element, which is none other than the Spirit of Truth, is steadily undermining the foundations upon which the superficial religious life of this present age is built up. He is bearing witness to the claims of Christ in a thousand hearts and is convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Uncertainty in Religion, negative creeds and conceptions of Christ, unbelief and indifference, have done and are doing their fatal work, and have shown once again how

worthless a Religion becomes when it ceases to be Divine and authoritative. But the aching human heart persists in asking its questions. It feels instinctively that God is and that, if it is to be happy and at peace, it must have certainty respecting Him. It stands face to face with sorrow and pain and with the awful fact of death. It is intuitively conscious of a great danger, of a possibly greater and irreparable loss. It is seeking a place of refuge from the storms and conflicts of life. It is half persuaded that there is such a place. It looks with longing towards the great Church in which so many noble hearts have found rest. But it wavers and trembles and hesitates. It shrinks, in its pride, from the world's frown and from the humiliation of an unreserved surrender, and indulges the vain hope that it will yet find the things of heaven amongst the things of earth —Divine Truth in purely human institutions.

"But out of the Catholic Church," as Cardinal Manning so forcibly said in one of his lectures,[1] "two things cannot be found—reality and certainty. In the Catholic Church these two things are your inheritance. Then tarry no longer. 'With the heart we believe.' It is not a struggle of the intellect, and I am not contending with you in an intellectual contest. I call upon your will to make an act of faith. Preventing grace illuminates the understanding

[1] *The Grounds of Faith.*

and moves the will, but there tarries. It tarries that it may put man on his probation, to see whether he will correspond or no with the light that has been granted. Correspond, then, with the light you have received. Answer, while yet you may, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. My heart is ready. Not Thy truth fails, but my faith is weak. I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief.'"

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